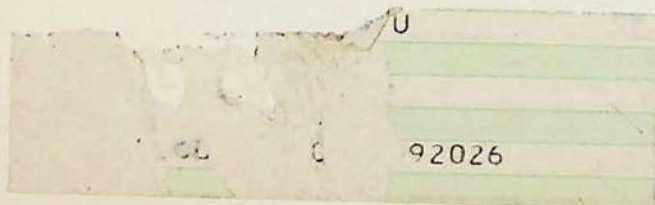




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IN THIS ISSUE:
APPAREL TRENDS: A LOOK TO
THE FUTURE
FASHION ACCESSORIES: THE
ADD-ONS
IS WALLYBALL HERE TO STAY?
CONVERSIONS: RETROFITTING
WITH PRE-ENGINEERED STEEL

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE
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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1981
VOL. 4 NO. 5
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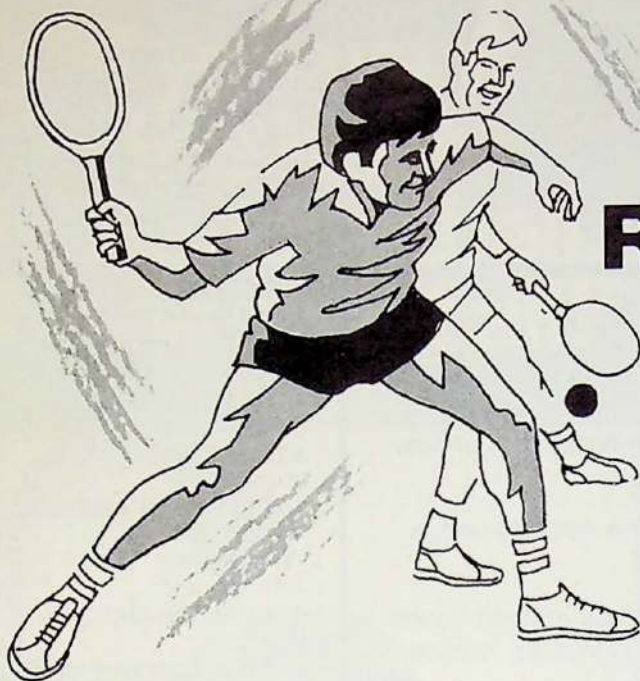


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EDITOR AND CO-PUBLISHER
Michael J. Keighley
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR AND
CO-PUBLISHER
Stanley J. Schwartz

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Joan Whaley, Joanne S. Weiss,
Pat Welch, Linda Shipman
SERVICE COLUMNS EDITOR
Bobbie Strutin

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
William Koelzer, Garron Weiker,
Morris Hollander, Steven Kay,
Ron Grimes, Sharon Banzhaf,
Joan Thorson, Norman Fixel
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Michael Gorzeck

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
Peter S. Perkel
ART DIRECTOR
Dixie Bogusky
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR
Andy Pirone

TYPOGRAPHY
John Challenor
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
Mark Land

EDITORIAL REFERENCE DIRECTOR
Denise Sculnick

NATIONAL ADVERTISING
MANAGER
David Weberndorfer

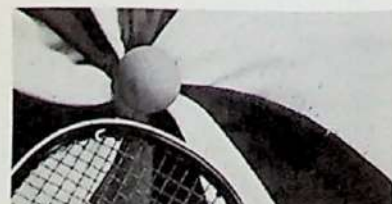
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NATIONAL
Richard Iorfida
1545 N.E. 123rd Street
No. Miami, FL 33161
Phone: (305) 893-8771

NEW YORK
Chris Calhoun
60 East 42nd Street
Suite 417
New York, NY 10165
Phone: (212) 599-2404

NEW ENGLAND
Dale Boenisch
Nanette Feil
The Englander Group, Inc.
18 Locust Avenue
Exeter, NH 03833
Phone: (603) 772-3410

MIDWESTERN STATES
Idos Maningas
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1720 Algonquin, Suite 201
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Phone: (312) 593-5255

WESTERN STATES
Bette Cochran
Cochran Enterprises
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Racquetball apparel and accessories can mean spiraling profits. Plus, features on wallyball and construction. Cover photo by Michael Gorzeck.

SEPT/OCT 81

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DEAR READERS,

Presently you are in the middle of your fall selling season, and you are undoubtedly gearing up for your most important selling period of the year — the Christmas and holiday season. Even in the midst of this activity and excitement, you need to be planning your spring fashion and equipment buying, and you need to make yourself aware of all the latest products and developments on the market. Let us offer a time-saving, efficient approach: Tennis Industry's National Buying Show, January 10, 11, and 12, 1982, in Miami Beach, Florida. While everyone who is anyone in the tennis industry will be exhibiting at the show, you may be surprised to learn that a remarkable number of manufacturers in the racquetball industry will also be there. The list of names is simply too long to record here. All of the standard names and major suppliers in the racquetball industry will be exhibiting: the most important manufacturers of apparel, racquets, accessories, shoes, fitness equipment, wall systems, floor systems, lighting, and much more will be there to offer you the best buying deals and educational opportunities available. Your attendance at the show will keep you on top of the industry and help you realize your goals for a strong and profitable year ahead.

And to keep your operation as profitable as possible, this issue features comprehensive information on the apparel and apparel accessory market. As the racquetball apparel industry evolves, you need to keep abreast of the latest developments in style and materials; you can find it here. You'll also discover the profit potential of your important accessory department — all of those low-cost, high-profit items that make your shop a winner.

In addition, you'll find the second part of our two-part construction feature: what role pre-engineered steel plays in retrofitting facilities. Plus, don't miss our special look at Wallyball, a new concept in sports combining volleyball and racquetball that's catching on fast around the country. This is a sure way to add a new profit center to your club.

These features, plus our department columns make this an important issue to read and save as an invaluable reference to make your business even better.

Cordially,

MICHAEL J. KEIGHLEY
Executive Editor

Come see us. All the latest DynaCam machines, designs and equipment will be on display at the Mr. Olympia Contest, October 10, 1981, at the Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, 300 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio.

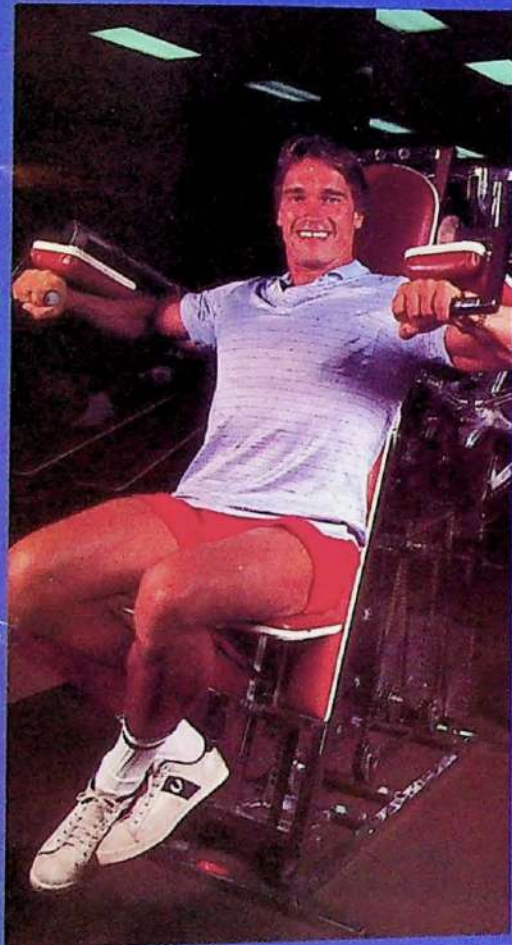
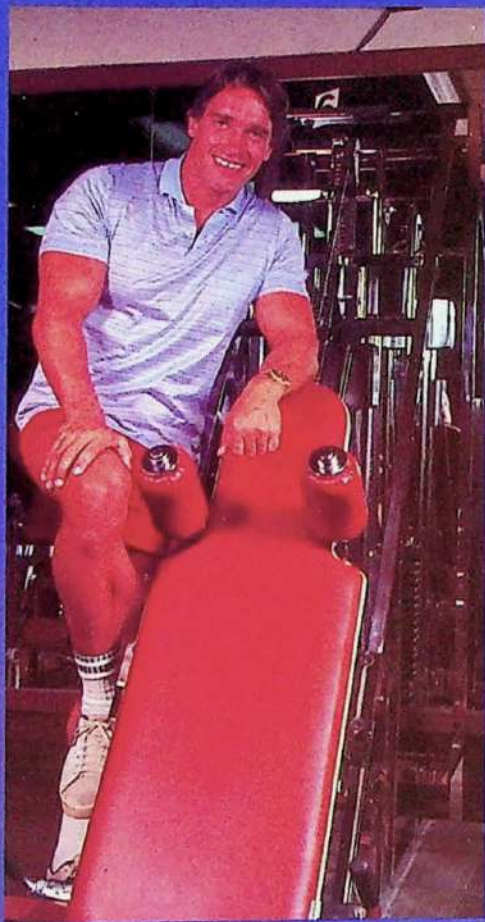
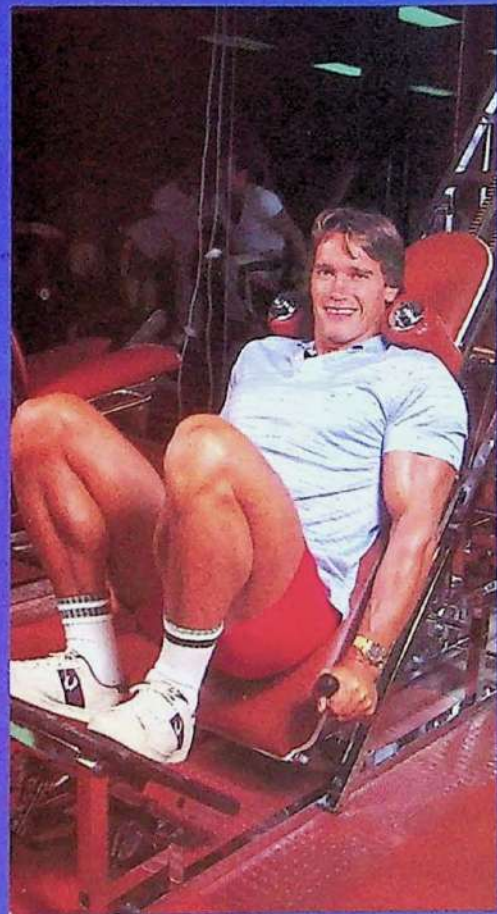


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Business Tips

SHIPPING

Among the many problems that inflation has brought to the small retailer, none is harsher than the increased cost of inventory. Capital borrowed at high interest rates to maintain inventory, or capital buried in inventory that could be earning high interest, constitutes a high strain on many businesses.

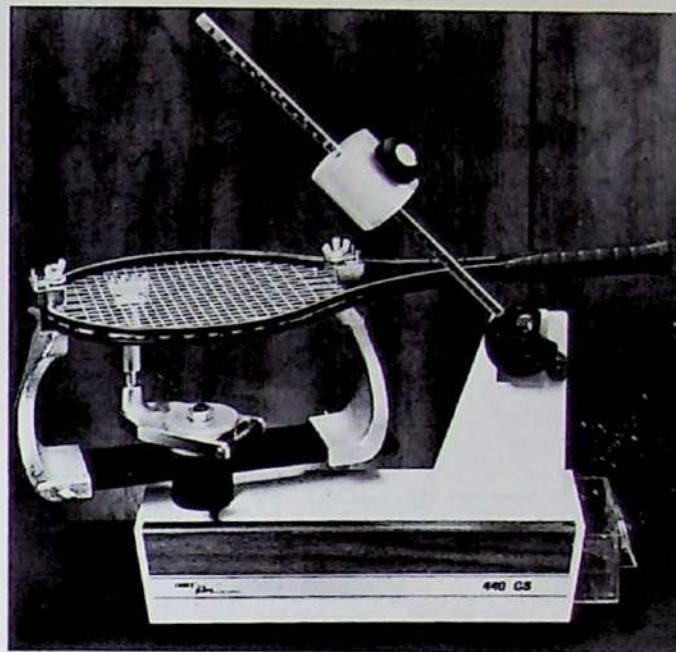
One method of attempting to reduce the impact of this cost is to adopt efficient transportation as part of your inventory system. The idea is to keep inventory low, and use dependable transportation to replenish stocks when required. Thus, less dormant capital is locked into inventory, while the business retains the flexibility that is essential in order to respond to the needs of customers.

Several methods of shipping are available to the retailer. We will discuss road carriers here, and detail Air Express, Federal Express and Express Mail in future columns. Each method has its advantages and drawbacks, so as you read through the series, keep in mind that you're looking for the one best suited to your particular needs. Each business has its own unique set of problems and needs; what works best for one company might be different from the one most successful for another.

Transportation today is in a state of flux and retrenchment. The 1980 Motor Carrier Act made sweeping changes in the competitive structure of American road transport. Competition is being encouraged, and indeed has taken the place of total regulation of service areas and rates. But, with the good comes the bad: Some carriers are facing new competitive challenges while struggling with reduced revenues, and some areas that have traditionally served certain local areas are being replaced by others. Nonetheless, if you live in a medium or large city, you will still be able to choose from a wide selection of delivery services for your local area.

At the present time, United Parcel Service (UPS) is the only carrier that can deliver to any address in the continental United States. Previously, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) imposed certain territorial restrictions on the company's operating certificates, but

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they have now been lifted.

However, the ICC still imposes some regulations on all carriers that ship out-of-state. For example, it is not possible to establish credit accounts with any interstate shipper. A couple of "credit plans" are available but what they really amount to are payment plans.

One plan that is used widely involves setting up a separate bank account. Your bank accepts the billing from the shipper and pays the bill; all you really have to worry about is keeping the account sup-

plied with enough money.

Another system requires you to pay the carrier you use on a regular basis a lump sum of money up front. The company then subtracts the amount you're charged each week until the money has been completely depleted. This lessens the amount of paperwork with which you have to concern yourself.

And of course, there's the pay-as-you-go system.

Motor carriers typically charge a nominal fee for daily pickup service (UPS currently asks \$2.50 a week).

Unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances, pickup is normally limited to one time a day.

The amount of time you will have to devote to the preparation of your shipment may not be as great as you might expect. If you are a regular customer, the forms you need to complete are nothing like the ones required for an over-the-counter transaction ... such as when you're having Christmas gifts packages sent to relatives. If you have a pickup account, your carrier should provide you with a pickup book. With the book, you need only make a single line entry for each package you send, showing destination, weight, and zone. If there is anything special or unusual about the shipment (is it C.O.D.?), you should also mark that down.

When the driver comes in, he will take his carbon copy of that sheet and leave the original for you as a receipt. You will be billed through the driver's copy.

Most carriers also keep a record of every package that goes through their system, and obtain a signature upon delivery as well, which enables you to trace a parcel and obtain proof that it has — or has not — been delivered.

It is also possible to combine ground carrier service and air courier service. Most major city motor carriers offer a service whereby they'll pick up a shipment at your business, drive it out to the nearest airport, and drop it off for transport to the designated city.

As with the other services they offer, the majority of carriers will usually offer some sort of time guarantee on shipments sent via air.

The main advantages of using motor carriers, then, are the pickup service ... which means your employees will not be diverted driving parcels somewhere for shipper (nor will the employees of your customers on the other end); the charges will generally be less than those asked by air parcel companies; and if you need an order rushed to its destination, you have the option of combining the two services. 

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APPAREL TRENDS: A Look To The Future

Yesterday, today and tomorrow, the words that signify racquetball clothing are "basic" and "comfortable." Regardless of what else is done to racquetball apparel and regardless of what fashion touches, fabrication changes or color shifts occur, if racquetball clothing isn't basic and comfortable, then it isn't truly racquetball clothing. As racquetball has gained in popularity, attracting more and more players to the sport, an increasing sophistication has been found in all aspects of the game.

Clubs have evolved into player-centered multipurpose facilities, offering much in the way of physical fitness emphasis to the members. Equipment spans the gamut of materials and shapes, and allows each player to attain his/her maximum performance — whether that's hard-hitting, or uncontrolled, or smoothly finessed shots. And trends have become apparent in racquetball clothing, but here the parameters and guidelines were set early on: whatever else it is, racquetball clothing must be both basic and comfortable. As Connie Bowser of At Ease pointed out, "There have been changes to a point, but they're not as great as one might think. We manufacture clothing for the person who's involved in the sport. They still have to be comfortable. That's number one. The fabrication basically has not changed, because it's really the ideal fabric for racquetball."

But, as is always true, one person's basic may be extravagant to someone else, and what one person finds comfortable, another may find restrictive or uncomfortable. Because of this, a definition of terms is probably in order here, so that we are in agreement as to what both of these qualities are.

Basic, at least for our purposes, means clothing that is able to fulfill the function for which it was designed. One of the first components of basic is that the clothing be multipurpose. "If anything," said John Calvert of Cal Sport, "people who are buying racquetball apparel are looking at it as a multipurpose, multi-function item." Bowser concurred. "More and more racquetball clubs are getting involved with fitness centers, and the same clothing applies to that. They've also put in an aerobic dance class in a lot of the clubs. The same clothing can be worn. It's really multipurpose clothing that isn't specifically for racquetball."

Len Kanarvogel of Eketelon also affirmed that, "In the early stages of racquetball, the uniform was a t-shirt and short. As more and more people got into the sport, instead of buying a racquetball-only outfit, they wanted clothing which they could wear outside of the racquetball court. They are looking for

clothing which is structured around function." The reason for this, stated Fred Hursh of Regal Sportswear, "are players' personal requirements. Racquetball players wear what they personally want to wear — not what they feel might be required by the club or what is currently in fashion. They want something that will absorb perspiration and will be very conducive to free movement. They are more functional than fashion oriented, and they want clothing that will work both on and off the court."

In order to fill these various requirements, racquetball apparel manufacturers stress the unconstructed clothing as part of their basic racquetball line. This is clothing without high fashion styling details which might get in the way during the game, or might interfere with freedom of movement. Soft, absorbent easy-care fabrics — often containing cotton for absorption and a polyester content for the easy wash/dry requirements — are made up into garments which stretch and move with the body. Bud Griffin of Activimage mentioned that, "Poly/

cotton has a breathability, which is important in racquetball, because of the perspiration which occurs. Two-faced fabric, with the cotton inside, wicks away the moisture, and you have the easy-care characteristics of the polyester. We found this to be pretty well on target from a styling standpoint." Raglan sleeves which allow free movement are also seen frequently. A basic racquetball line is often comprised of separates which combine all these features.

At the same time, there is some attempt to position garments so that they proclaim the wearer to be a member of the racquetball fraternity. While this is not as pronounced as it is in many other sports, the total picture usually does state "racquetball." Griffin mentioned that, "There's a look that says racquetball. People will play various sports while wearing the same clothing, yet there is an attempt to design apparel especially for racquetball. While this won't differ, to any big degree, from the clothing for other sports, racquetball does have its own minor differences, and when you put them all together,

you're going to come up with a different entry as far as racquetball apparel is concerned." These lines, said Hursh, "are also geared to nonparticipants, because they want to look like participants. We feel this is a bigger market than the actual players. But all this clothing is manufactured so that it will hold up under the most strenuous activity."

The second component that must be satisfied is comfort. This is second only in order of discussion, not in requirements, because being comfortable ranks right alongside of basic in order of importance; and as a matter of fact, may be primary, since if racquetball clothing isn't comfortable, it doesn't matter much what else it is. That's why manufacturers stress that the clothing in their racquetball line is designed to be "a players' line," as Bowser said. "Players feel comfortable in these clothes. This is clothing that is durable, and that can withstand a good workout."

A final factor — one that hasn't been mentioned before but one that must always be considered — is price. Clothing, stressed Kanarvogel,

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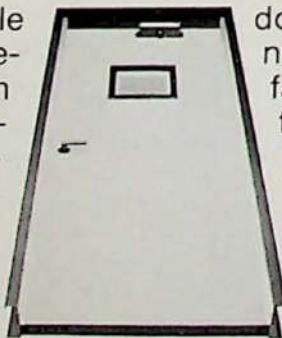
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Yesterday the emphasis was on these factors. Once the requirement of basic, comfortable clothing at a desired price point was filled, then apparel manufacturers were able to introduce a little more styling; creating apparel which, said Griffin, "is a little more sophisticated. It's not so sophisticated that it looks like spectator sportswear, yet it's a little more sophisticated than what used to be available." Appearing today, then,

and apparent for the future, will be a little more styling, a little more fashion and a little more sophistication in racquetball apparel. If basic and comfortable are the cake, then styling and sophistication will be the icing — an icing that is decorative and fashionable for the wearer, and profitable for you.

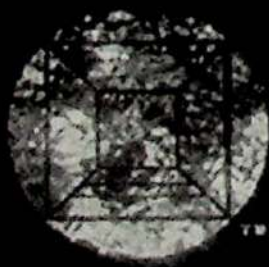
Hursh affirmed this. "I would say I see a trend today towards more fashion," he said. Kanarvogel also indicated that, "The product line for today is a mixture of functional/stylish apparel for both men and women." Even with this, though, chances are you'll never see really high fashion in the racquetball marketplace. "I don't believe this is a fashion industry," said Bowser. "It's a players' preference situation. In other words, as long as the clothing is comfortable, although there will be color changes and trim changes — an improvement in the aesthetics — I don't think that fashion will ever enter into racquetball."

Although you may never find highly structured, carefully tailored accents and fashion touches in racquetball apparel, one of the places

fashion will reflect itself is in the coloration. Hursh explained that, "We really don't build a lot of fashion into the clothing, but we try to make functional garments with fashion colors." Kelly green, navy, white, gold and red are all offered, along with such earth tones as camel or tan, pastels with such exuberant names as icy grape ... the color palette is broad and many-hued. Just as basic features must be satisfied before clothing becomes more fashion conscious, so too must basic color be available before the subtler hues are introduced.

One reason for this is to keep your inventory in a strong sales position. Griffin noted that, "To the pro shop, basic colors mean that they won't have garments that are out of date, so that they don't have to take markdowns and discount merchandise. They hate that." For this reason, the color offering of most manufacturers contains the basics — sometimes known as athletic colors — but then usually adds shades of the same color and tones of other colors that combine well with the more vivid hue. This allows mix-and-match cap-

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ability to be used, while at the same time introducing a touch of fashion and color into the line.

As you look ahead and plan your pro shop buying for the months to come, the points to keep in mind are still primarily, 1) basic and 2) comfortable. This means that the apparel you carry won't change much. In fact, commented Bowser, "We only do one line a year, so that the customer can reorder all the time, treating his clothing as a functional item." These two qualities, at the right price points for your members, will be your main sales-makers. When you combine those two factors with the various trims, small styling details, and high fashion colors that are being seen today, you'll find even further sales building. There's an old saying that if something's working right, you leave it alone, and that's definitely true about your racquetball apparel. So for the future, expect to see more fashions that include these things, but look to colors and color trims to spark sales for you.

Fashion may not be the big story for your apparel this year, but one of

the key details you should look for in your merchandise are logos. Logoed merchandise is probably the hottest thing going this year, whether you're talking racquetball, Parisian fashion or American ready-to-wear. Almost everywhere, you see people wearing clothing that sports a designer's name, an animal motif, a slogan or some other logo which is unique, distinctive, and highly indicative of the wearers' image of themselves. Calvert illustrated that, "I was on vacation last week. We were in a local resort and just for the heck of it, every night when we went out I was testing myself and my kids. I would say, 'Find someone in this restaurant or this room that does not have some type of logo identification on their clothing.' We could not find any. It was unbelievable. Ninety-five percent of the people in any given place had some type of logo or identification on their clothing. Imagine the subtle advertising."

It's this type of advertising that you should be taking advantage of in your pro shop. Perhaps you don't want to carry shirts emblazoned with long

mottos on the front, but you should certainly have your club logo imprinted on a t-shirt or on the shorts you carry. Your customers may not want designer initials on their clothing, but you can bet they want something that will indicate their favorite participation sport and place preference. It's your club. Make your members proud of it. Don't hesitate to carry logoed merchandise, and make a point of having your own logo imprinted on other goods. It's one of the greatest forms of advertising going.

Another area that you certainly shouldn't overlook, and one that really is relatively new to many racquetball pro shops, is warmup suits. Long noted as tennis apparel, warmups gradually began to expand into other participation areas, and they have now made their appearance in the racquetball market. More than that, they are taking it by storm. All sorts of warmups — including outdoor and lightweight indoor. In fact, said Bowser, "There are a lot of people who cannot work out in shorts because the machines can be uncomfortable, so an indoor warmup allows

17



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comfort in that situation. We also have a fleece warmup which can be worn indoors as well as out."

By and large, though, your players will want warmups to be worn outdoors, before and after their games. Griffin noted that these warmups "are sort of a fashion item. I don't see people playing in a warmup to any degree. They like to use them for warming up, but these are primarily outfits to be worn to the racquetball court." Most manufacturers agree with him. Calvert mentioned that, "since racquetball is an indoor sport, the re-

quirements for warming up in a suit are not very high. Warmups are used primarily before and after playing. Players will wear one to the club and take it off when they get there. When people are through playing they get chilled, so they are wearing the warmups after they take their showers."

Part of the reason for the strong interest in warmups today was indicated by Kanarvogel. "Racquetball is not the type of sport that you use a warmup to play in," he said. "It is occasionally used by people who are warming up, but after the first minute or so you

don't need anything to warm up with. What happens is that many times people may be late for an appointment or have to be somewhere else, and they won't have time for a shower. They need the warmup to help control their body temperature, so that they can go from the racquetball facility to their car, without injuring any muscles. The second application is that there are an awful lot of people who are proud that they play racquetball, and they want to make a statement off the court. They want a product that is nicely styled, that has a contemporary fabric, and that identifies them as a racquetball player."

Your merchandising efforts for all your racquetball apparel are relatively easy. Since the styles maintain a basic stance, people can easily choose a comfortable, functional fashion that will meet their needs. You can help stimulate further sales by wearing the products you carry. As Kanarvogel said, "People want to emulate the teacher, not only in his style, but in the way he dresses. The feeling is that if you dress like the pro, and play with the same racquet, and listen to what he/she says, then you'll play like him/her." Obviously, it's going to take some strenuous hours before most of your members play anywhere near the way you do, but it doesn't take much to create the image. A few dollars spent on racquetball apparel in your pro shop will easily accomplish that.

The future may not bring a great many changes in the racquetball apparel you carry. People will continue to find that they can purchase warmups and basic, comfortable clothing — and the fashion emphasis will be through color and trim. But that's not a bad thing to look forward to. When your players know that they can come to your shop and buy exactly the type of apparel they need for the game, and get a good value and quality for the price they pay, that builds confidence and trust, and contributes a great deal to your image of racquetball expertise. In a rapidly changing world, the knowledge that little changed quality products are available from you can be a real plus. What it adds up to is a really successful sales situation for you. ☐

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By DR. GARRON G. WEIKER

PROBLEMS OF THE LEG

Injuries and disease of the knees and ankles are well recognized, but we must remember that other problems do occur in the leg between these joints. Some understanding of these problems may be beneficial in advising players at your club when they develop leg pain.

Chronic low grade pain in the mid-portion of the leg may be simple muscular strain, but there are five basic problems to keep in mind. First is the well-publicized shin splints that are frequently debated within the medical profession, but basically represent an inflammation of the ori-

gin of the leg muscles. They seem to result from usage that exceeds the level of muscle development and conditioning and, if left untreated, may progress into the second problem known as stress fracture. Stress fracture is a simple hairline crack that comes from repetitive stressing and stimulation of a bone at a rate that requires remodeling and rebuilding faster than the body is capable of accomplishing it. This results in a relative weakness and breakdown of the basic architecture of the bone and the subsequent fine hairline fracture. Both of these entities are recognized by feeling an area of tenderness and/or fullness along the edges of the surface bone (tibia) at the front of the leg. If either occurs, it is wise for the player to be seen by a sports medicine physician where he or she will most likely start on an initial conservative program with icing, anti-inflammatory agents, special exercising and possibly taping techniques. Most importantly, a period of rest will allow the body's normal healing process to catch up with the demands.

The muscles of the leg are divided

into four separate compartments which are encased by fascial sheaths much like the skin around a link sausage or hot dog. If these sheets are relatively tight for the amount of muscle within them and the outflow of blood is limited in any way, it is possible to have them become engorged with exercise. If this reaches a point where the outflow of blood is shut off and the pressure within the compartment increases severely, there is an onset of severe pain which is known as intermittent compartment syndrome. The classic description of this problem is the onset of severe and disabling pain after 10-20 minutes of play which then resolves totally after 10-15 minutes of rest and elevation. This pattern requires evaluation by a physician and if it proves to be true compartment syndrome, the player is forced into a decision of either discontinuing the activities that cause the symptoms or having a surgical release of the tight fascial sheaths around the compartments.

Pain in the back of the calf, other than normal muscle aches, may indi-

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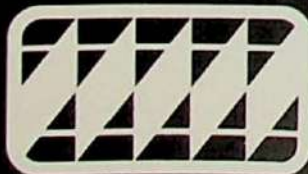
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cate impending severe problems. The two most common major difficulties in this area are referred to as partial rupture of the medial head of gastrocnemius muscle and rupture of the Achilles tendon. Both of these entities normally occur in people between the ages of 35-60 and they both usually have a period of weeks to months of gradually progressive aching and pain in the involved structure prior to the rupture.

Regrettably, we are unaware of any method at present to prevent the so-called partial rupture of the medial head of the gastrocnemius muscle. The gastrocnemius, or main calf muscle, has a junction between the tendon and the muscle belly at approximately mid-calf. If you look at the back of someone with well defined calf musculature, you can see a definite bulge of muscle belly and then a step off down to the tendon which precedes on down to the heel. On the medial, or inner, side of that junction, an area of mild, progressive, chronic aching frequently develops and fails to resolve over a normal period of time. After a period of weeks or months, the athlete will note a sudden, sharp pain in the back of the calf which feels initially as if he was struck by a ball or racquet while playing sports, particularly tennis and racquetball. The pain is intense, immediate, and totally disabling, and can be localized at a pinpoint area on the medial side of this muscle-tendon junction. As with other muscle and ligament injuries, we recommend initial icing and then referral to a physician. Initial treatment is usually a cast or high heeled shoes with crutches until the pain resolves and then gradual stretching to regain the length of the muscle. The negative aspects of this entity are that we have no known prevention, it is totally disabling in the average person for three to six weeks, and once it occurs on one side, there is a high degree of probability that it will occur on the opposite side within the next four to five years. The positive aspects are that it does resolve without any form of surgical intervention and once it clears, there is 100 percent return to function with no fear of repeat occurrence on the same side.

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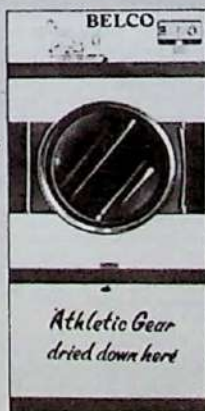
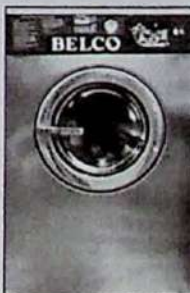
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Most dramatic in this area is the problem of Achilles tendon ruptures. Again, the ruptures are usually preceded by a prolonged period of progressive aching and pain in the area of the Achilles tendon, although it will occasionally rupture without the preliminary symptoms. The usual mechanism of injury involves playing to the point of muscle fatigue and then making a maximum effort to reach a ball with the resultant so-called eccentric contraction. Eccentric contraction refers to the process of attempting to tighten and contract a muscle at the same time that the forces acting against it are too strong for it and therefore, it is forced to stretch and lengthen during active contraction. When the Achilles tendon ruptures, there is again severe pain with the individual frequently thinking that they have been struck or shot in the back of the heel. They are immediately totally disabled and should receive an ice pack with referral to a sports medicine physician. There are two basic patterns of treatment for Achilles tendon ruptures which are utilized at the discretion of the patient and the doctor, but in general now the trend is toward surgical repair rather than prolonged casting in a special position.

Although there is no absolute way to prevent any of these problems discussed, the general pattern of good common sense related to athletics will decrease the frequency. Players should be advised to maintain good muscle conditioning including the use of lifting facilities, if available. In addition, there is a great deal of importance attached to stretching and warm-up prior to aggressive play as well as having the intelligence to recognize the onset of severe fatigue. When fatigue does become severe enough to demonstrate any loss of coordination and response, the individual would be wise to discontinue play rather than to risk injury. The final recommendation would be that people who have preexisting chronic aches and pains that fail to clear over a two to three week period should seek the advice of a sports medicine physician prior to the dramatic injury which will result in a prolonged disability. 



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fashion accessories: THE ADD-ONS

While fashion in the racquetball industry is generally considered to be at an embryonic stage, it is clear that the general thrust is toward more fashion design in apparel specifically geared to racquetball. We have noted in many previous articles the trend in racquetball clubs to an upgraded image, and a country club type of atmosphere is becoming the norm. This greater awareness of appearances and the more luxurious setting of the club has had its effect on apparel trends. In order for members to fit into this upgraded status and to maintain the proper image of the club, manufacturers are offering functional and fashionable racquetball attire.

Where there are fashions, there are fashion accessories. These are made to complement the members' attire, and so make the perfect add-on sales. In addition, these are items your members will purchase for their own sake as essential components of the game. Gloves, headbands, wristbands, and socks are the most important fashion accessories in racquetball. While the purchase of a \$1.50 wristband may pale in comparison to a \$30.00 pair of shorts, it would be a serious mistake to overlook the profit potential of these small accessory items. Fashion accessories are one of the few product categories that will

bear full markup in your shop, they are repeat sale items, and they are the perfect add-on sale. In short, they are one of the most profitable areas of your pro shop virtually assuring you of a steady source of income and a sound return on investment.

The accessories you offer in your pro shop, like all your other merchandise, should be of superior quality. Your members may end up having to pay a few more pennies or a few more dollars per item than they would from a mass merchant, but there will seldom — if ever — be any resistance to your prices. Accessories are generally inexpensive items — even the highest quality products — and your members will not likely comparison shop for such merchandise. In addition, your members always look to you for only the finest equipment and product available. With less than dynamic economic conditions, many people are forced to delay or completely forego the purchase of high priced items. However, your members will continue buying accessories, and within this lower price point category be determined

to go first class. The purchase of fashion accessories enables your customers to satisfy their need for something new at the same time as they receive an attractive, quality product.

Another important merchandising feature of accessories is that they are frequently purchased on impulse. The very nature of an impulse item precludes comparison shopping; therefore, your pro shop sales are even more certain to be increased by a well-displayed fashion accessory department.

GLOVES

"Today, gloves are one of the most important selling items in a racquet-ball pro shop," declares Lee Nylen, President of Champion Glove Company. And Nylen notes the repeat-sale quality of gloves: "You buy a pair of shorts, and they last a long time; you buy a pair of shoes, and they last a long time. Gloves, on the other hand, probably take more abuse than anything, considering how hard the player grips the racquet. Consequently, turnovers are great, and second only to balls in shop sales."

The life span of a glove depends on how much the player plays. Nylen estimates that even a top quality glove will only last about six weeks for the dedicated, hard player, while someone who plays once a week may be able to use the same glove for an entire year. What distinguishes a top quality glove? Actually, there are a number of features: First is the quality of the leather. When a glove is new, there is, according to Nylen, "little to distinguish one skin from another skin. But once the glove is worn and perspiration or dampness covers the glove, then you can tell what particular tannage the leather has." In the tanning process, the leather is treated to give it a nonslip quality. Deerskin and sheepskin are often preferred for gloves as these skins tend to retain their softness and not become brittle or stiff once the gloves dry.

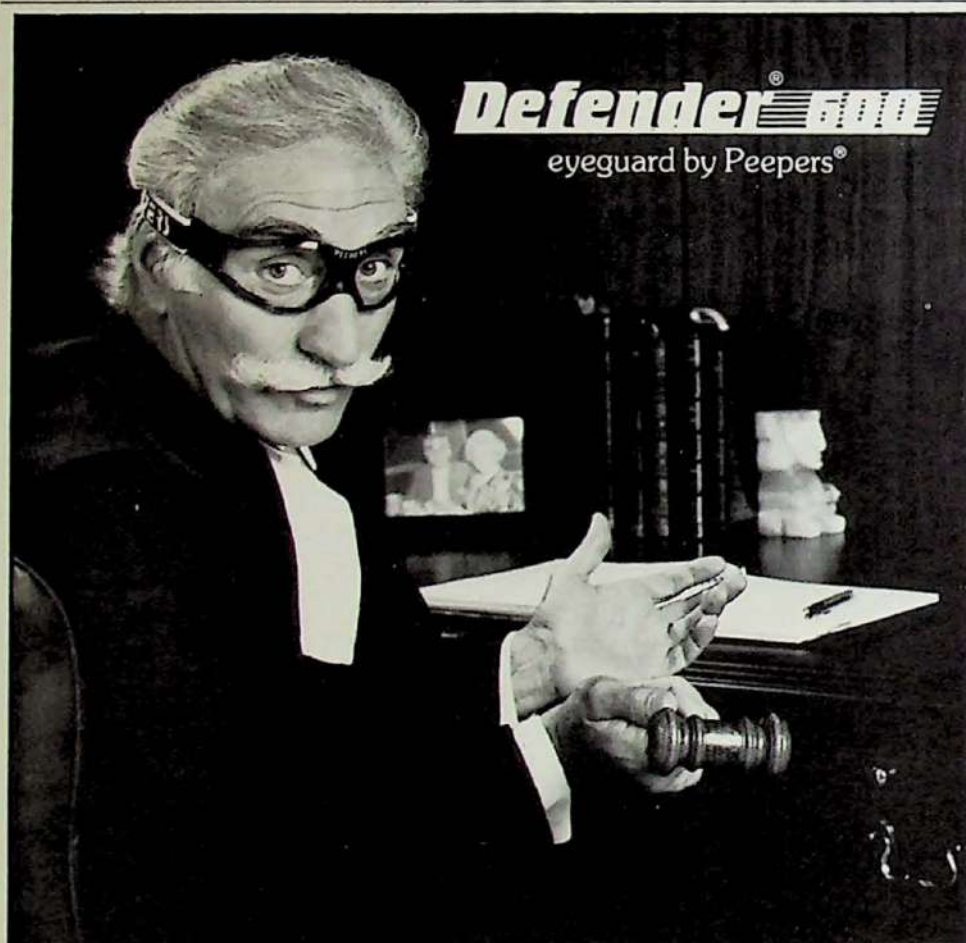
Proper seaming is also important. Where the manufacturer follows a sport glove pattern in constructing the glove, most of the seams are eliminated — both on the palm of the glove and on the front of the fingers. The more seams there are in a glove, then the greater the possibilities are for tearing and the more disconcerting and uncomfortable it is for the player when gripping the racquet.

Some gloves also have a "stay-tight" feature built into them. This is an elastic material that stretches over the back of the hand and prevents the glove from rolling or moving even when the hand perspires.

When merchandising gloves, you should aim for multiple sales. There is a very practical reason why serious players should have more than one glove. Nylen remarks: "People who play hard should have three gloves at their disposal. After the first game, the glove could be soaked with perspiration. After the game, or even during it, they can take the glove off and put on a dry one." For comfort and maximum effectiveness, it only makes sense for the player to have more than one glove available.

Gloves will be purchased in their own right, but they also make the perfect add-on sale. Particularly in the case of a novice it is wise to encourage this new player to buy a

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SEPT/OCT 81

glove when he is outfitting himself at your pro shop. As he goes to purchase a racquet, inform him that one of the standard items of equipment is a glove; it will improve performance and make the game more comfortable and enjoyable. Plus, it will boost your profits.

There is also, of course, a fashion dimension to gloves, and they should be merchandised as coordinating accessories with apparel. When your members are outfitting themselves with new shorts and tops or shirts, then suggest that they purchase the gloves that color coordinate with their apparel. Since quality gloves retail in a range of \$7 to \$12, and since your customers have just been willing to invest many times that in clothing, then resistance to price will likely not be a consideration, and again you will add to the sale. At an average markup of 45 percent, profits are significant.

Being able to fit the customer properly is also important. Nylen recommends that a quality glove, especially deer or sheepskin, "should be a little snug on a first fitting. If it fits a

little loose, then it will probably stretch more and be too big on their hand. I'm talking about top-quality gloves. Lower end gloves will tend to shrink."

The most important merchandising technique for all of your accessories, including gloves, is proper display. All of your accessories should be displayed in the same area — departmentalize this product category. Then, within your accessory department, keep the same items together. Some manufacturers have complete accessory packages where, on a single free-standing display, sweatbands, socks, and gloves are accessible to your customers.

Otherwise, if you desire to have a separate display rack solely for gloves, then these are also available. Both countertop and free-standing floor racks can be used to display the items so that each color and each style is visible to your members.

Aside from display, probably the greatest merchandising asset in a club is the pro. Al Lavetti, Vice President and Director of Marketing at SAI by Kemfast, asserts: "The club pro

often doesn't realize how influential he or she is. In order to encourage the idea of coordinated outfits, then the pro should appear on the courts in style. He's the Pied Piper. If the pro is in style, then he can influence everybody in the club into buying stylish, coordinated apparel and accessories."

The converse is true, too. If you appear on the court too casually attired, not even wearing a glove, perhaps, then your members will respond similarly. They won't wear a glove, they won't seek coordinating attire — from apparel to accessories — and you will lose sales. Just because fashion is still not clearly defined for racquetball clubs, it is even more incumbent upon you to take the lead and point the direction in fashion for your members.

SOCKS

Again, these are repeat sale items and one of the most profitable categories in your shop. Norman Fixel, President of Softouch Company, explains the source of the profitability: "It's because of the markup. The markup of accessory items is signifi-

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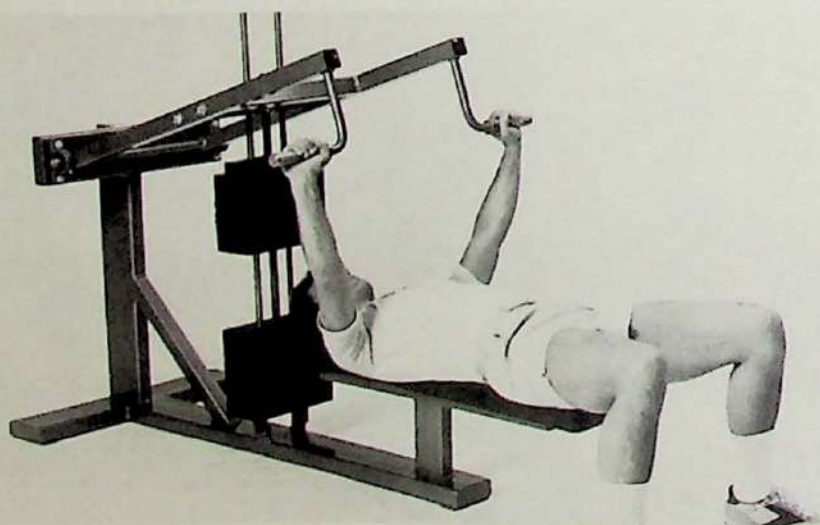
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cantly higher than of shoes, racquets and clothes; and there is virtually no markdown on accessories. You don't have closeouts on socks as you do on, say, a discontinued model of a racquet or a discontinued or slow-moving shoe. Even if business is slow, then you still don't have to mark down socks. You don't have as much money tied up in socks as you do in shoes, so you aren't forced to mark down the item. It is full markup all the time." Socks are normally key-stoned for sale at retail.

High bulk orlon, cotton, and to a somewhat lesser extent, wool are in demand. Lavetti explains some of the features to look for in socks: "You want a sock with good wicking (absorption), comfort against the foot and durability and strength. Cotton plays cool, is soft, and is highly absorbent, and orlon adds strength and durability."

To get the best qualities of each material, manufacturers often blend the cotton and the orlon. The double cushioned sole and double wicking action are sometimes features in quality socks, and there are support-

ive features especially in calf-length socks.

"Socks are impulse items," asserts Neal Jennings, President of Rockford Textiles, "and they can be displayed on countertop, floor racks, or hanging racks, as long as they are located where they catch the eye of the person that is just browsing through the shop." Along with your accessories, socks should be located in high traffic areas in order to maximize the impulse purchase.

Socks should also be displayed and presented to appeal not only to sight, but also to touch. Fixel insists, "Socks are sold because people like the way they feel. The whole key is to get the sock in the person's hand." Packaging can be a bonus for you in this regard when done properly. The optimum may be to have hang-tag packaging where the entire sock can be handled directly. On the other hand, you may want to have a poly bag packaging to prevent dust and dirt from detracting from the appearance of the sock. Manufacturers often provide an opening in the bag in order to allow

your customer to feel the fabric.

Display socks so that colors are readily visible. Colors are almost the exclusive fashion quality in socks and you want colors that coordinate with your other apparel. Lavetti points out that "there are five basic colors in racquetball fashions; white, blue, and red, in that order, are most important, plus natural tone and yellow. The white is almost never pure white but in combination with some other color to add a little spark." Consequently, for your socks, gloves, and sweatbands, you want these same colors available and highly visible in order to coordinate with the rest of your apparel offerings.

WRISTBANDS AND HEADBANDS

As simple an item as a sweatband may appear, there are important differences in quality between the low end offerings and what you should make available in your shop. The main differences are in the quality and weight of the fabric and the quality of the elastic. Bill Durrant, Vice President of Marketing at Ridgeview Mills, explains, "In all knitting, weight predicates cost." And Durrant

31

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estimates that a top quality, heavy weight sweatband will contain about 40 percent more cotton and 50 percent more lycra spandex (the elastic agent) than a medium weight, mass merchandised product. That is not to say that there isn't a place for the medium weight, or even the light weight products; rather this is simply to point out the difference in quality in available products. As the authority in your field and specialist in racquetball products, you will likely want to carry only top-of-the-line merchandise — from shoes and rac-

quets to sweatbands.

Again, these are impulse items; they should be displayed in your accessory department, and they should be highly visible and in easy reach of your customers. In addition to display racks, where the bands will sometimes be located with socks and possibly gloves, Durrant notes that there are many ways to present the product: "One club placed an old nail keg on their countertop, filled it with loose wristbands, and it was amazing how many they sold." In order to maximize sales through coor-

dinating units, Durrant recommends that first the pro "lays out apparel or places it on a mannequin, then coordinates the look with wristbands and headbands."

It only makes sense, then, to have as many colors of bands as you have colors in apparel offerings. Basic to your stock should be plain (natural), red and white, blue and white, three-stripe bands and the standard solid colors. Durant sees pinstripe styles and double size bands being well received also. Since it is not likely that you will routinely be able to order a dozen of each color many times during the year, manufacturers have developed an assortment program where a broad range of colors are available in a single package of three dozen.

The bands cost approximately \$6 per dozen and should be keystoned. Remembering that these are fast turnover items with strong repeat sale potential will encourage your close attention to these accessory items.

A CLOSING POINT

All of your accessory items should be turned from four to six times a year. Any less than that, and you probably are simply ignoring the department. Any more than that, and you probably are losing sales from ordering too short. Almost all of these items should be keystoned, but in some cases you can get as much as a 300 percent markup, simply because these are low cost items, and that is a return that you will hardly expect from most of your merchandise.

Manufacturers have available Target Sales Analysis charts to help you plot your present sales and target future goals. Depending on the nature of your shop — the extent of your apparel offerings and equipment in relation to your accessories — fashion accessories will probably account for 15-25 percent of total shop sales. A breakdown would be something in the neighborhood of the following:

Socks:	7-10%
Sweatbands:	2- 5%
Gloves:	5-10%

By displaying properly, by offering a top quality product, and by meeting the specific needs of your customers when you place orders, then you should be able to reap the maximum return on a minimum investment. 

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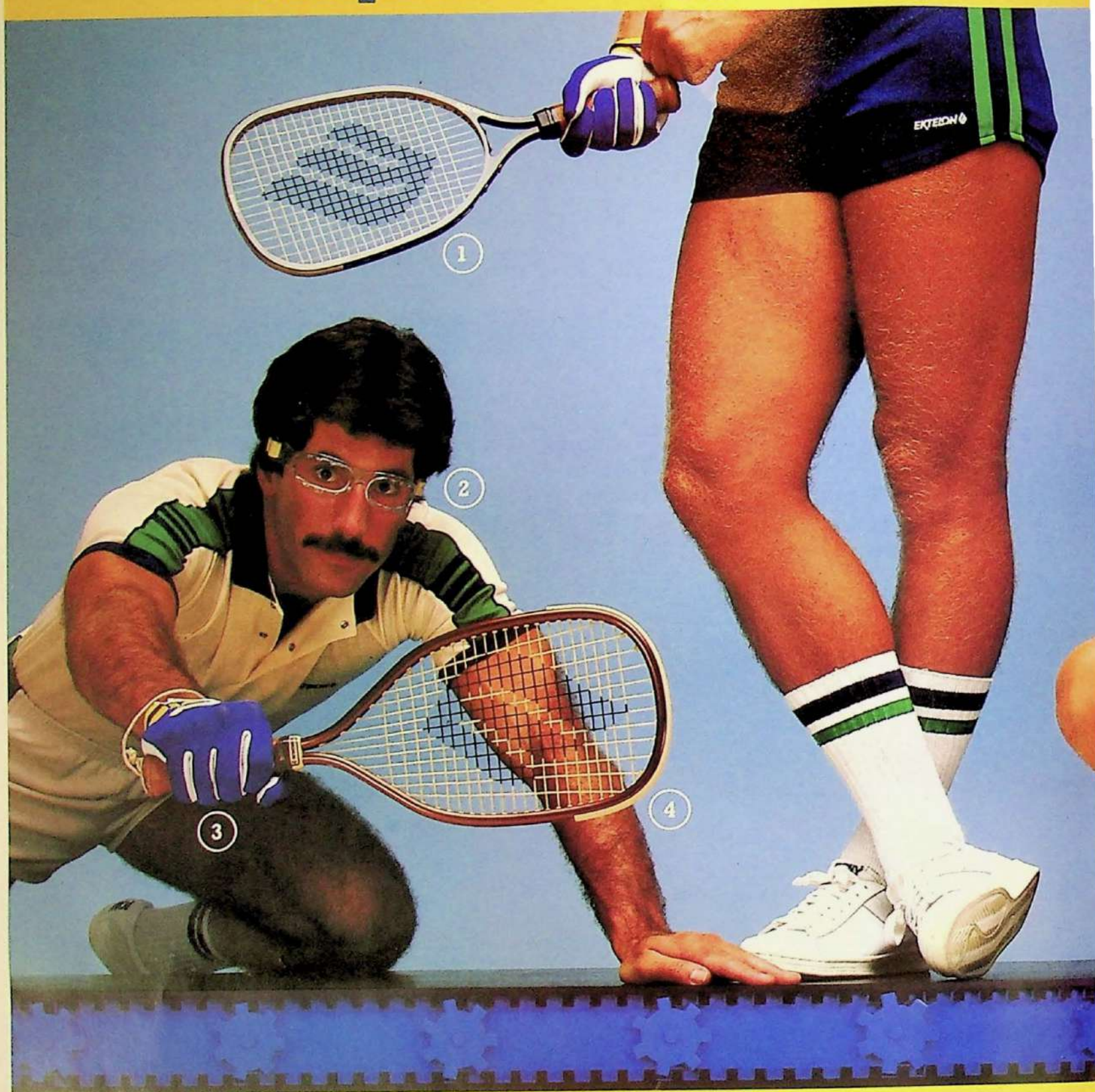
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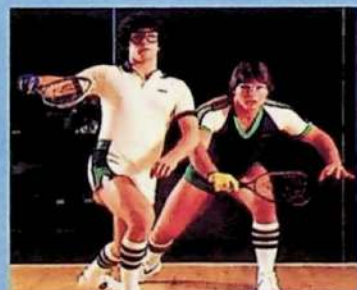
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ACCOUNTING

By Morris Hollander, C.P.A.

THE SMALL COMPANY AND RECESSION

For the owner of the small company this may be the first experience in weathering a serious economic downturn. What are some of the actions companies can take to get along in recessionary times like these? This article will attempt to point out a number of ways that small companies can cope with these factors.

INVENTORY

One of the best measures that you can take with respect to inventory is to keep a tight control on it. Don't let yourself get stuck with any excess inventory that you'll have to eat. Watch your trend of sales and orders; when they begin to decrease, cut down on your inventory. Stay alert for other danger signals as well. Talk to customers about their sales; get a line on what kind of orders to expect even before these customers have made up their own minds. Also find out what deliveries may be behind schedule; they can spell trouble.

OVERHEAD

Analyze your "fixed" costs. These represent the kind of expenses that you have to pay regardless of the level of business you are doing. Question everything; are certain items merely desirable or are they indispensable? Look at energy costs. You can't do much about the rates, but you can control the amounts used. Consider alternative sources, but don't get committed to large expenditures at this time. The emphasis should be on short-term, not long-term, costs.

TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT

Question these items like a tax examiner. How much did the trip or business dinner produce on the bottom line? Would a phone call have been equally as effective?

COLLECTIONS

Speed them up. Show your concern over what is owed you; let debtors know you want the money now. Use the mails, then telephone. Making yourself heard can at least move you up a notch or two on a priority-payment list. When it's appropriate consider holding up shipments for slow payers, or making shipments COD.

PARTICIPATION

Get all of your people in the company into the cost-cutting act. If they understand that one of the by-products of cost control can be saving jobs, they'll cooperate.

FINALLY, TAXES

Your CPA is not likely to overlook opportunities open to you in this department, but talk over with him or her the various options and alternatives; accelerated depreciation, cash versus accrual accounting, LIFO inventory evaluation, etc. In this fashion, you can reassure yourself everything possible is being done.

SUMMARY

What does all of this add up to? Being aware of what can be done in times of recession. And, watching your company's cash like a hawk — all the time! 

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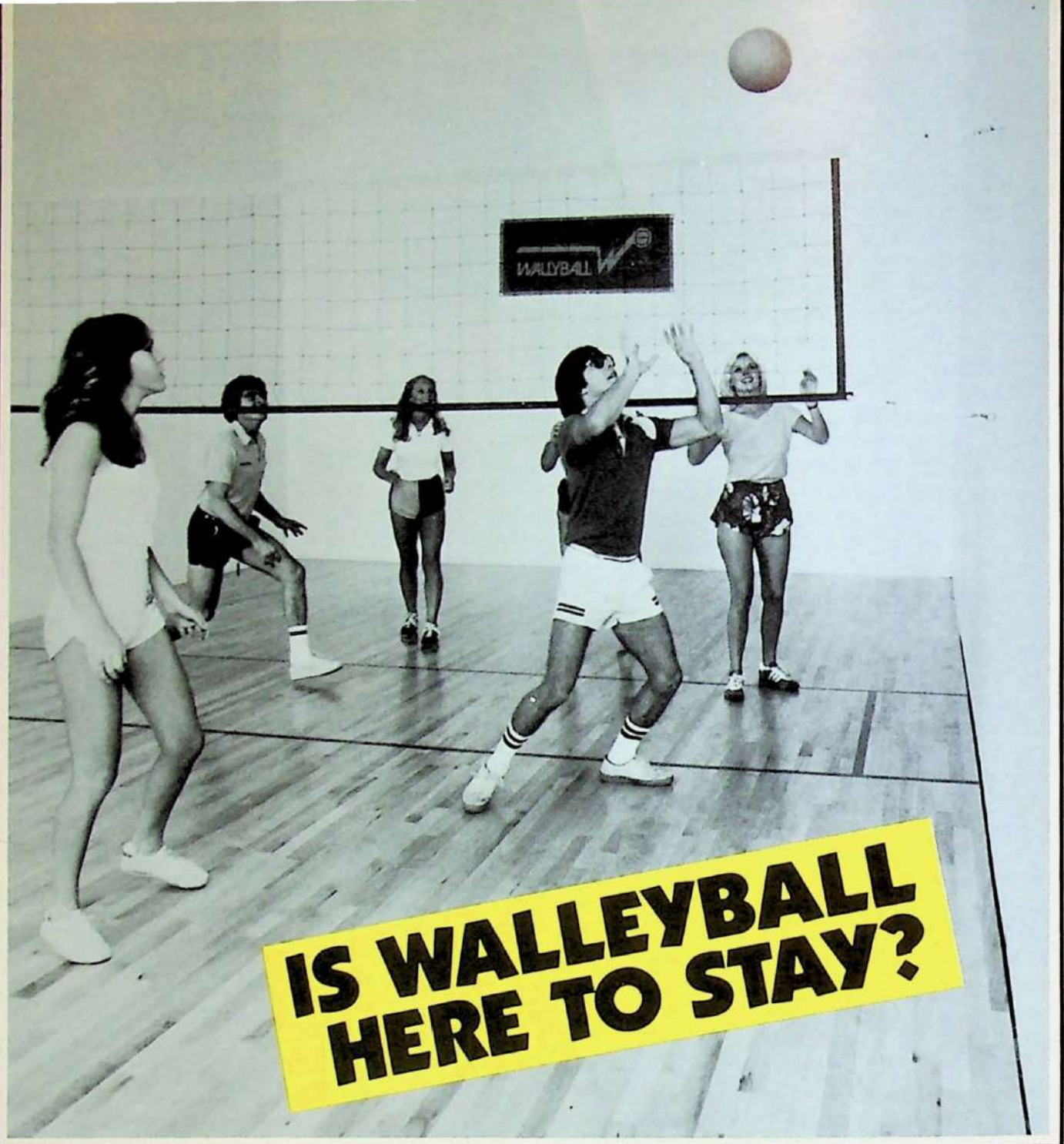
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By WILLIAM KOELZER

Each year, a handful of new sports are invented, promoted and tested for player response. Most, however, are quickly forgotten primarily because players themselves do not find the sports particularly enjoyable.

The new sport of wallyball seems to have passed that critical "enjoyment" test among players. It has a chance of now becoming as commonly known as Volleyball or racquetball in the next few years especially because of its ability to increase both club revenue and memberships.

Wallyball is played by stringing an eight-foot-high net across a racquetball court and using volleyball rules, except that shots can be banked off the side walls and the rear wall of the team that is returning a serve or volley. The ball is out-of-bounds when it hits the ceiling, the back wall on a serve or volley, or hits two or more walls on a serve or volley.

According to one set of rules, games are won by a team scoring 15 points, with a two-point advantage. Teams have from two to four players with points scored only by

the team serving.

Why have well over 300 clubs across the country started offering wallyball? They say it's because it offers high return on a minimal investment.

Dr. Bud Muehleisen, owner of Muehleisen Courts in El Cajon, California, and a player and promoter of legendary impact on the early growth of racquetball says, "Wallyball has everything going for it — even now in its infancy. It's easy to play, fun and inexpensive. In fact, the attitude when going to play wallyball is a lot like it is when going to a picnic."

Muehleisen feels wallyball is also a blessing for club owners. "From the owner's standpoint, the adaptation of courts to wallyball requires a very minimal investment that can easily produce a very high revenue. This revenue comes from keeping courts filled and from attracting a new type of person to the club — particularly those who regularly play volleyball. If a successful club is one which can become the "in" place for people, it really doesn't matter much *what* game they play just as long as they come."

Regarding the best ways for a club to introduce wallyball, Muehleisen says, "In the early days of racquetball, we actually had to make movies of games being played and then show them throughout the community

before people would come in and try it. And the need to promote *outside* the club is the same for wallyball.

"Among clubs, just as in everything else, there are followers and there are doers. Clubs that are quick to realize wallyball needs to be heavily advertised externally are the same clubs who will become the "in" places for the game as its popularity spreads."

Is wallyball merely a fad? Muehleisen thinks only time will prove that point. "However, I see people experiencing the same fun and end result I saw in them during the beginning years of racquetball. Wallyball gives the player that added dimension of being really involved in team play and that kind of supportive play adds much to building closer relationships among club members.

"This all translates to more frequent club visits and a desire to participate more in a club's social and hospitality offerings, especially among families in which only one member previously visited the club solely for racquetball," he said.

The reason wallyball is growing so quickly, Muehleisen believes, is that it fulfills precisely the requirements that clubs have traditionally sought in becoming successful — a lot of people having a lot of fun sharing a game *together*.

Some clubs, such as the Rollout



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Racquetball Club, Rocky Hill, Connecticut, spent less than \$100 in hard costs to prepare courts for wallyball. The Rocky Hill Club managers simply purchased volleyball nets and cut them down to the 20 foot racquetball court lengths. Then, by drilling holes in the court wall and using anchor bolts (glass walls use suction cups), their court was ready.

Since net attachment hardware fits flush with the wall, the court can still be used for racquetball by simply removing the eye hooks and net. Installation takes under two hours by an experienced carpenter or contractor.

Most clubs, however, choose to eliminate time and labor costs of installing wallyball themselves and instead purchase complete wallyball kits available from several manufacturers. Price for these are from \$175 to \$375. And at first glance, such an investment may seem high. Yet, is it really?

As Joe Garcia, president of the manufacturing firm, Wallyball, Inc., Calabasas, California says, "Wallyball is growing because it makes more money for club owners. With wallyball, you usually have six to eight people on a court — three or four on a side. And they're each paying say two dollars.

"So, for an hour of wallyball court time, the owner gets \$12 to \$16 versus a maximum of \$5 to \$6 for singles racquetball and \$8 to \$10 for doubles. In a month's time, a wallyball investment can easily pay itself out."

Garcia's claim is backed up by more than a few club owners. Leroy Bush, owner of Court South Racquetball Club, Columbus, Georgia has all 10 of his courts set up for wallyball. "We're primarily a racquetball club and we're going to stay that way, he said. "But, we're using wallyball as a drawing card. The advertising dollars you spend on promoting wallyball get you ten times the return you can get promoting racquetball."

In March 1980, Court South had only 700 members. By June, there were 1,100. And, then in late June, Bush introduced wallyball.

"You've got to really promote a brand new sport such as wallyball," Bush says. "And you've got to go out in the community to do it, too. You

can't just string up a net and expect all your regular racquetball players to instantly become enthusiastic. In fact, they're not even the primary market for wallyball."

Bush ran heavy radio advertising for two weeks, promoting a special "Wallyball Tournament Day" to be held a Saturday last summer. And on Tournament Day, a local radio station aired a remote broadcast from the club.

"It was incredible," Bush says. "We had over 3,000 people come through our doors. And, that was even with bad weather. We had to rent a nearby parking lot and a shuttle bus to run people from there to the club. It took five policemen to direct all the traffic."

Bush had expected no more than 10 teams to compete, meaning the tourney could start late and run at a leisurely pace all day long. But by Friday evening, it became necessary to advance the starting time to 6:30 a.m. On Saturday, over 75 teams competed until 2:30 Sunday morning, consuming 125 cases of beer.

"We sold only \$1,700 worth of new memberships," Bush laments. "We had six employees selling memberships all day long, but unfortunately managing the crowd took up most of their selling time."

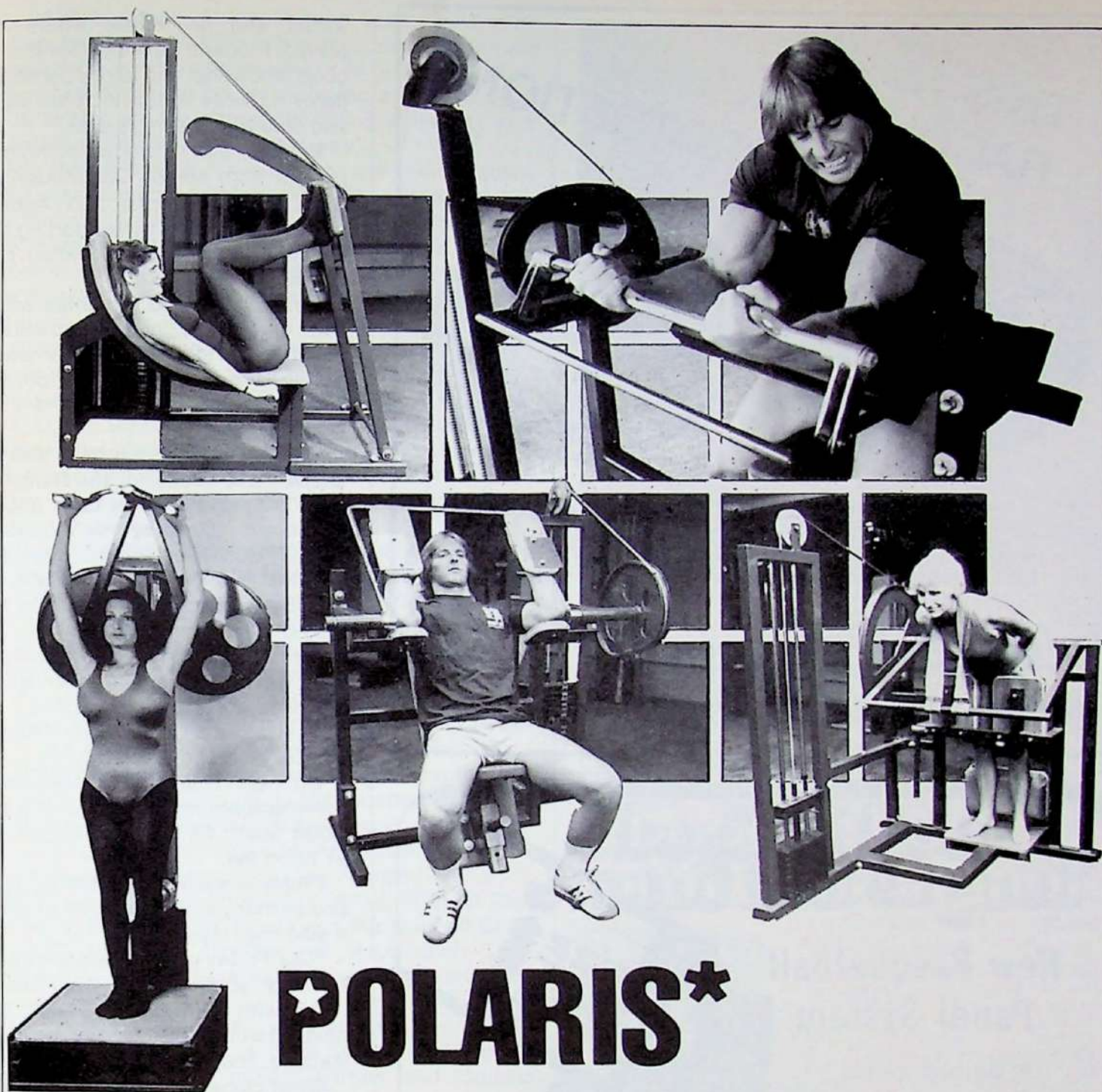
Since the Saturday wallyball event, Court South's membership has grown from 1,100 to 1,550. "And I directly attribute wallyball with bringing us 250 of those," Bush affirms.

He explains, "Promoting wallyball lets an owner show people who don't play racquetball what a club is all about. They come in for wallyball — because they can play it — then they see the exercise room, steam room, sauna bath, whirlpool, racquetball courts, nursery and so on. And they say, 'Heck, we can play wallyball and get all this other stuff, too.'"

With Court South memberships at \$45 for women, \$65 for men and \$75 for families, the revenue directly attributed by Bush to wallyball is substantial.

Bush says, "Wallyball is a salvation for the little clubs when things slow down in the summer. And for clubs in cold climates, it's an attraction for people who can't play volleyball in the

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winter. But no matter where it's played, it opens up a club for lots of good fellowship and family participation. And those factors increase visits and club revenue in general."

Bush's club attracts volleyball players from nearby Columbus College (7,000 students) and Auburn University (38,000), by supporting the coaches in physical education programs.

Court South also promotes wallyball challenges among hospitals, disc jockeys (who in turn promote it during broadcasts), fire fighters, police officers, churches and little leagues.

The latest large promotion was on October 25, "Battle of the Bankers" with 150 players. "One bank got up 10 teams (50 players, including subs)," Bush says, "and even the smallest had four teams. We sold 68 memberships in one day to just the kind of clientele we like."

Bush also attracted 200 persons to a big Halloween party at which wallyball was a featured attraction. The club charged \$4 per person. Guests had full use of all facilities.

On Wednesday and Friday nights, non-members may play wallyball at Court South for \$1 guest fee plus a \$1 court fee.

Friday is wallyball challenge night and as many as 20 teams with five on a side play regularly.

"Our Friday gross revenue used to be only about \$300," Bush says. "Now, with wallyball, it's \$1,500. The next job will be to set up our wallyball leagues. The people really want it."

Other clubs around the country are also having good success with wallyball. Dave Izzo, manager, Playoff Racquetball/Handball Club, Braintree, Massachusetts, says, "We started with two courts a few months ago and we're already adding two more. And, our wallyball league play started around mid-November."

Izzo's club with 14 courts and 2,000 members promoted wallyball by offering it free for a few weeks. "The crowds really got into it," Izzo says. "We set up one court right by the beer area so everyone could see it."

The Duluth Clubhouse, Duluth, Minnesota, has been offering wallyball only since October. However, af-

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ter just three weeks, Manager John Locker said, "I'm certain that it's something to heavily pursue. In fact, we already have a full time man who does nothing else but call on businesses to get team sponsors for the league we're setting up. We intend promoting wallyball in a professional, marketing-oriented way."

The league will be for members and non-members and Locker expects to have 200 teams competing Friday through Sunday.

"We started with one court as a test but now that the response has been so overwhelming, we're converting four more. With wallyball, there's a whole new market out there. It gets women, who perhaps wouldn't play racquetball, to start coming in and that's going to mean lots of new members."

Locker is also working with the University of Minnesota, Duluth Branch, to offer a one-unit P.E. class. "We already have 200 students playing racquetball here for P.E. credit. And we're setting up an intramural wallyball league for students from 10 p.m. to midnight, Monday through Thursday."

Wallyball should also increase the number of visits per week among those who regularly come in only one day. "Because," Locker points out, "the wives can play wallyball while the husband is playing racquetball or while he's watching Monday night football at home."

The club wasted no time in promoting wallyball. A local TV station couldn't resist Locker's offer to introduce the new sport to Duluth, and the Duluth Herald newspaper ran a large article on wallyball at his club.

Locker cautions, "You've absolutely got to promote it. But when you do, it pays off. In two months, we'll have major sponsors for our league teams and we held our first tournament in January, also with a major sponsor."

The wallyball phenomenon, according to Locker, is spreading in his area. Courtside Limited, Thunder Bay, Ontario; Hibbing Indoor Tennis and Racquetball Club, Hibbing, Minnesota; and Spooner Racquetball Club, Spooner, Wisconsin have either installed wallyball or will very soon.

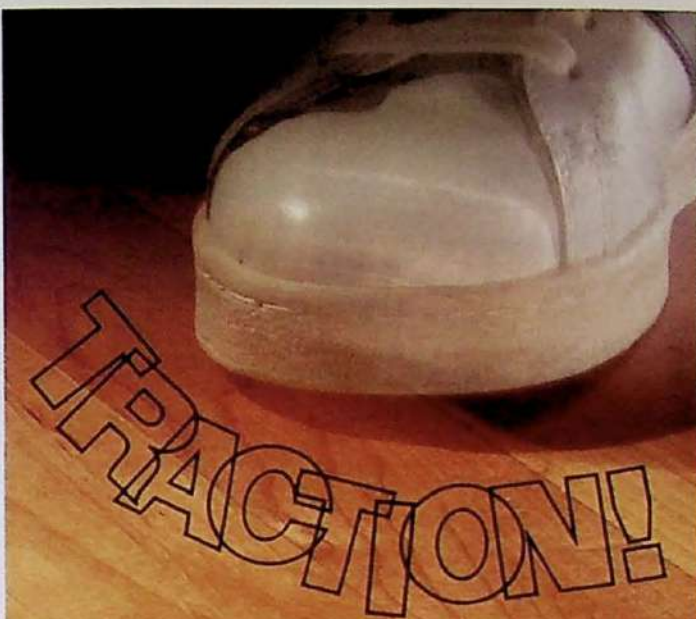
Randy Hats, Manager, Kandi Kourts, Willmar, Minnesota says, "Wallyball is a great ice breaker among groups. Especially at private parties and 'couple nights.'"

Kandi Kourts works closely with Willmar Community College where volleyball is popular. "Hopefully, we'll be offering wallyball for P.E. credit next year," Izzo says. "We're already doing it with racquetball."

Hats says wallyball is popular with schools because, "They look for P.E. activities that almost anybody can play, regardless of athletic ability."

Kandi Kourts started a mixed doubles wallyball league in November, plus a wallyball social night with snacks. "I think wallyball will be a plus for us and bring in new memberships," Hats says.

Fitness Unlimited Club in Shreveport, Louisiana, installed wallyball in early September. "All I've gotten is positive responses," says Manager John Garner. "I can see lots of potential. People who've played it so far have definitely liked it, and they've been very eager to set up a league. So, we started one in early November."



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Fitness Unlimited also plans having a rotating "wallyball night." Since just under half of total memberships (650) are family ones, Garner feels wallyball fits in very well. Fitness Unlimited is initially offering wallyball as a main attraction on no-charge "church nights." "It's good exposure for the club's facilities," Garner says.

Calabasas Racquetball Club, Calabasas, California has two courts set up for wallyball for a year. Paul Taggart, manager, says, "When people see it for the first time, they're stunned. They love playing it, especially the families. One couple calls once a month for a court and then brings in eight or ten people with them."

The Calabasas Club offers wallyball Sunday evenings from 6-9. They make it a pizza and beer event with participants paying a fee that includes wallyball.

"We're setting up a corporate wallyball league," Taggart says, "because there's so many companies around here. We'll be alternating wallyball with racquetball for company players on Sunday evenings."

"Ever since several of the larger consumer racquetball magazines ran articles on wallyball in October," Taggart says, "people call us all the time and say, 'Hey, do you have wallyball over there?'"

What's the best way to make wallyball a success at a club? "Promote it like crazy," says Leroy Bush of Court South in Columbus, Georgia. "And go out to the community; not just promote it to members."

Bush spends a considerable amount of time working on promoting wallyball to the community. He also works closely with radio stations, beer distributors, soft drink firms, and gives frequent talks on wallyball before municipal groups such as police officers and fire fighters to set up leagues.

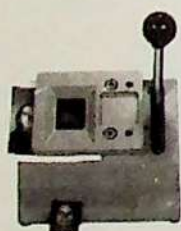
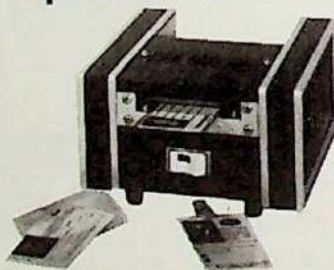
Will wallyball continue growing in popularity? Clubs that are offering it now seem very pleased with its success. And this is logical.

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Racquetball manufacturers exhibiting at the show include AMF Head, Leach, Ashaway Line & Twine, At Ease, Bata Shoe Co., Cal Sport, Carnaby, Inc., Champion Glove, Devant Ltd., Devoe Lighting, Dynamics Health Equipment, Ektelon, Esco, El-sco Lighting Products, Lob-Ster, RPM, Penn, Foot-Joy, Nautilus, The National Fitness Association, Supreme Grip, Terstep, Universal, Wilson, YMS Sports, Thermo Materials, VR Creations, Regal, Winn, Tree-forms, Consolidated Service Group, Wilson, Rocky Mountain Sports, and more.

Tennis Industry's National Buying Show marks an important buying and educational opportunity not only for the tennis industry but also for pro shop owners, operators, developers, and professionals of the racquetball industry. For more information on the show, contact Hardy C. Katz, Director of Tennis Industry's National Buying Show, 1545 N.E. 123 Street, North Miami, FL 33161, or call (305) 893-8773.

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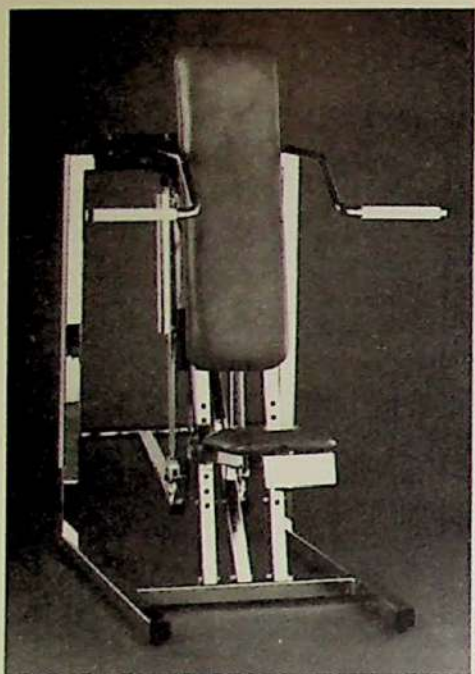
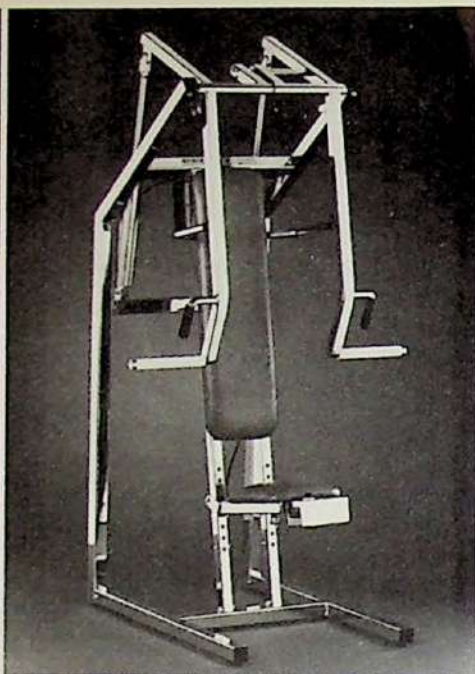
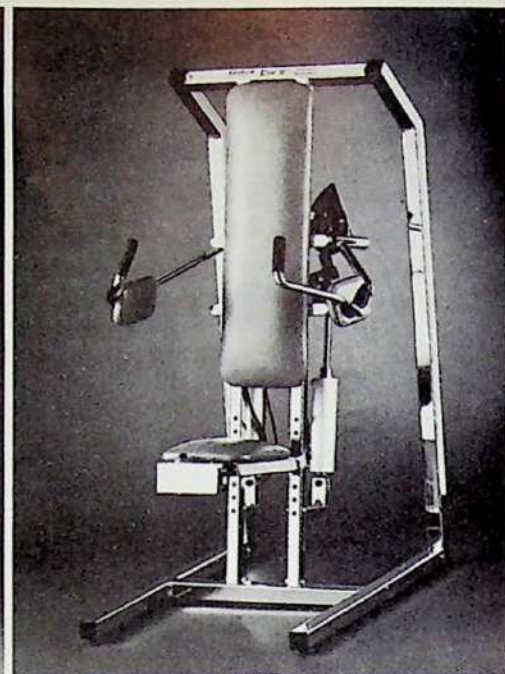
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By STEVEN KAY

COURT DOORS

The door which leads into a racquetball court is the only operating part of the entire court, and as such, should be given careful consideration when planning to build or remodel.

Quite often, the door is considered as an afterthought, but should not be, because it is the only item in a court likely to cause problems and will usually be one of the first things to go bad. The cost of your court's door is approximately two percent of the total construction price of a court. By investing in a good door initially, you can save yourself a lot of money in repairs and lost court time later.

Your court door will take a lot of abuse; much more than any residential or most other types of commercial doors. Balls will not only hit against it, but people will kick it, bang on it, swing on the door closer and generally take out their frustrations on it. Surprisingly, much of the abuse will be to the outside of the door (on the corridor side) from people impatient to take their turn at play.

A racquetball court door is comprised of six key elements: the frame, the hinge, the door itself, the latch, the door closer and the viewport or peephole. When constructing the door you should also pay careful attention to fire rating requirements in your city or state.

Quite often, people don't even consider the door frame as anything significant, but it is actually what makes the whole thing work. If you have a strong door frame, you could

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put in a weaker door and it would last longer than if you have a strong door and a weaker frame. It must be set into the wall, so that when the door is closed in the frame, the door will be flush against the court wall, along with the frame.

The hinge, which holds the frame and the door itself together, should be much stronger than a residential door hinge. A racquetball door hinge should probably have a full-length, continuous hinge. This will help make the door flush with the wall

and will assist in keeping the door in its place when it is subjected to the pounding/kicking/banging action of people.

An average door will have two or three hinges with three screws in each hinge support. A continuous hinge has some 20 screws, so that if even half of them come loose, there is still plenty of strength left in the others to keep the door in place.

The door itself should have a solid core. Two types of solid cores are suitable: stave wood core and parti-

cle board core. With stave wood, two by twos are laid together and glued to form a solid wood core. Particle board core is composed of high density wood particles that are glued together with resins and compressed under pressure to make a board.

Particle board cores, which are often used for shelving, are often selected, because there are no weak spots, as can be found in solid wood. The density of the particle board cores is much higher than wood and is more resistant to dents.

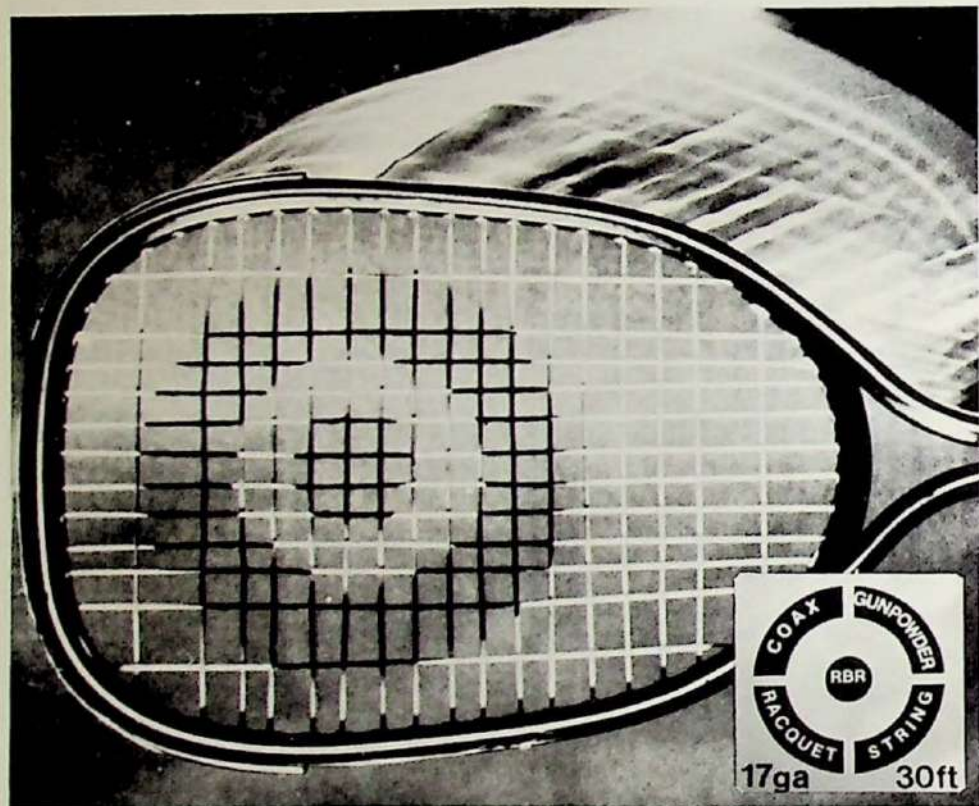
On top of either core is a door skin, which can be made from either a hard wood like birch or oak; or they can be made of plastic laminate, also known as formica.

The latch is optional and most likely will be one of the following types. The first is no latch, where the door closer is used to keep the door shut. A push plate is on the outside and a ring pull on the inside facing the court. The second type is a roller latch, with the push plate and the same ring pull, but with a little ball catch that actually catches in a little strike plate inside the door frame. A third kind is an operating ring pull which actually turns the latch and operates the latch so it pulls out of the strike plate. This will have a knob on the outside and a flush operating ring pull on the inside facing the court.

The only way to completely eliminate maintenance is to have a door with no latch at all. However, be sure and check with the appropriate government agencies to see that a door with no latch conforms to fire rating requirements. Many places have a 20 minute fire rating, which means the door must be able to withstand 20 minutes of fire before it spills out into the corridor. The fire rating is not done so much to keep a fire from entering a court as to keep a fire in a court from spreading beyond the confines of that room.

The door closer, although not essential, is important because it effectively prevents the door from being slammed or opened too quickly. Located at the top of the door, it activates the door so it will close back on the person leaving a court. Acting as a control to prevent the door from being opened or closed too quickly pro-

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fects a lot of the door's installation, since there is no way for the frame to become loosened in the wall.

Since a racquetball court door usually opens inward, an adequate viewing area, be it a peephole or viewport, is an important safety factor. Quite often, people will open the door to the court when they are looking for a person and this can be quite dangerous for a player running in the back of the court — he or she is likely to either get hit by the door or run into it. To minimize this dangerous situation, you should probably have a generous viewport, either 10 or 16 inches square, rather than a peephole, which is much smaller and distorts distances. The viewport is made of either tempered glass or acrylic plastic.

Part of what you do in your business is sell the game by having people watch the play. A large viewport is much more suited to this purpose than a peephole. With a 16-inch square viewing area, two people can stand comfortably to watch.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is an adage aptly applied to court door maintenance. Tighten the screws periodically and you'll save yourself a lot of lost revenue in down time and angry customers. If your door is falling off its hinges, people won't be too happy about it. Or, if the latch fails to open, you can lock somebody in. Periodic maintenance, along with a well-constructed door will prevent or minimize these type problems.

Since a trouble-free court door is an integral, important part of your court, you should not be afraid to question your architect and contractor closely about all the points described in this article. You must make sure you are getting a strong, well-built unit; one that can withstand the abnormal abuse it takes. If the architect specifies a good unit the contractor will bid the correct type of door and will have the proper information when he installs it. You will be protected right from the beginning if your door is detailed in the plans, just like other parts of the building. Your door is where you make your money — do it right the first time, and you won't regret it. 

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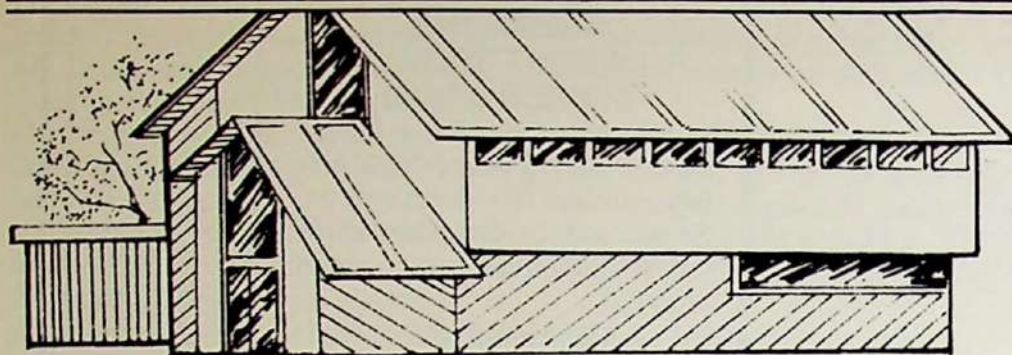
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CONVERSIONS: RETROFITTING WITH PRE-ENGINEERED STEEL

In the last issue of RACQUETBALL INDUSTRY we considered the various factors involved with new construction from pre-engineered steel buildings. This article will focus on conversions, renovations and expansion, and what the role of pre-engineered steel components is in these cases. Pre-engineered steel is distinguished from conventional construction in that the building components are prefabricated according to rigid, computer-controlled specifications at the factory and then erected at the site. In conventional construction, on the other hand, all of the labor is done on site; conventional construction commonly refers to brick and mortar type buildings, tilt-up concrete, wood construction, CBS (concrete block and stucco), etc.

WHY CONVERSIONS?

Among developers, converting an existing structure to racquetball use is being seen as a viable alternative to new construction. Some of the reasons for this are readily apparent. Prime rate is hovering around 20 percent, labor costs are extreme, and financing is frequently easier to obtain for conversions than for new construction. Another important reason to consider converting is that you can almost always be assured of quicker opening and, consequently, generating as much as a year's worth of income that you wouldn't have had you opted for new construction.

Of course, there are limitations to

converting an existing facility as well, most notably, in terms of location and flexibility in design. Location is the single most critical factor when it comes to establishing a successful, revenue-producing club over the long term. And if that structurally sound building at just the right price happens to be located in the center of a dingy industrial complex, you may have to pass the opportunity by for another building in a proper location at a later date. Basically you should be looking for a building in a highly visible location within a prime radius of seven or eight minutes and a secondary radius of 12 to 15 minutes. Be certain, however, that many desirable locations do exist in downtown areas, suburban areas, smaller communities, and even in modern industrial parks throughout the country that will serve your purpose. If no land is available to build from scratch or if you have discovered distress properties in a location that meet your criteria for location, then certainly you should consider conversion.

Flexibility is another important factor to consider when selecting a building. Naturally, you will be somewhat limited in how you can lay out your club with an existing building, but the imagination of architects and design groups can often overcome this limitation. In general you should seek out buildings with open spans to allow you the greatest flexibility of design and court layout.

In addition, you should look for

buildings that meet height requirements, buildings where you can attain adequate climate control, facilities with adequate parking, areas where you can meet zoning restrictions, and you should have a complete structural evaluation performed on the building that you are considering for conversion. The March/April, 1981, issue of RACQUETBALL INDUSTRY gives detailed information on these and other factors to take into account when you consider your conversion plans.

STEEL AND CONVERSIONS

Once you have decided on that downtown theater, abandoned warehouse, grocery, skating rink — whatever type of building you choose — then very likely that structure will require renovation and rejuvenation. Pre-engineered steel plays a significant role in this renovation for both practical and aesthetic reasons.

ROOFING SYSTEMS

Many of the buildings you find suitable for conversion will be 30 to 50 years old or older. While the building itself may be structurally sound, you will often find the need to re-roof the structure. You can't afford to have a leaky roof — nothing destroys a racquetball court more quickly — and you want the structure to be as energy efficient as possible. Fifty years ago energy efficiency was not a primary concern of builders, but obviously that has changed.

The common practice in older buildings was to install what is known as a built-up roof. A built-up roof uses conventional construction materials. From the plywood base, the roof is actually built up with layers of fiber board, tar, tar paper, and gravel. A metal roof, on the other hand, is composed of metal panels with insulation incorporated into the panels.

Craig Propst, Advertising Manager of Atlantic Building Systems, explains the limitations of the built-up roof: "With daily and seasonal fluctuations in temperature, and with differences in temperature between the inside and outside of the structure, there is a certain amount of expan-

sion and contraction of the roof. And this is normal. A built-up roof, however, is stationary, and because of this, the expansion and contraction can literally tear a roof apart. The tar may expand a lot as it heats up during the day. At night when it cools, the tar will shrink back, and as it does so, it can tear the roof away from the flashings. The roof cracks and peels at this point, and it not only leaks, but it reduces any energy efficiency the roof may have provided."

As energy has become a major concern of both owners and developers, and as technology has advanced in the metal building industry, metal roofs have been developed to cope with the problem of expansion and contraction. One system that has de-

veloped is the "floating roof." In this system the whole roof — clips, fasteners, trim, and accessories — is designed to move slightly so that it doesn't tear apart. It is durable, maintains its weather tightness and energy-efficient characteristics, and requires virtually no maintenance.

Dick Corbitt, Advertising Manager of Star Building Systems notes the convenience and efficiency of retrofitting with metal roofs. Metal building manufacturers "can go in and make the building more energy efficient without disturbing the ongoing activity inside so there is no down time at the facility. In most cases the metal roof can be erected right over the existing roof. Interlocking seams make the roof virtually leakproof, and

the added insulation of the metal roof, plus the insulation already in the existing roof, increases the thermal efficiency of the building."

When a metal roof is installed over a conventional built-up roof, it will sometimes be necessary to create at least a minimal slope. Technologically, this is a simple matter, and the slope often will need to be no more than one-quarter inch per 12 inches. There are also ways of preventing water and ice from standing and damming up on the roof that are pre-engineered in the construction. This is, of course, to prevent deterioration of the structure, reduce maintenance, and add years of life to the new roofing system.

Metal roofs also provide increased aesthetic appeal. Manufacturers can arrange to incorporate skylights, for example, into the structure. And there are examples of blending the skylights with curvilinear aluminum ceilings on the interior for an attractive, contemporary look.

WALL SYSTEMS

The advantages of increased energy efficiency and the ability to erect wall panels over the existing structure without disrupting activity inside applies to pre-engineered wall systems as well as roof systems. Of course, if this is a conversion project, you probably will renovate the exterior as well as the interior prior to opening, so ongoing activity may not be a crucial consideration anyway. Nevertheless, if exterior renovation is minimal, allowing you to open prior to completion, or whether a total resurrection of the exterior is necessary, retrofitting with pre-engineered metal panels should be considered as one viable approach.

There are two major reasons for retrofitting with pre-engineered steel: increased energy efficiency and improved aesthetics. Special foam or fiberglass insulation — often factory installed in the panels — can improve U values by as much as five to 10 times that of uninsulated concrete walls. (The U value refers to the rate of heat loss and is the inverse of the



Retrofitting buildings with pre-engineered steel is a relatively simple process that provides a cost-efficient and energy-efficient alternative to new construction. Photo courtesy of Star Manufacturing Co.

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R value, a measure of the ability of a substance to resist heat transfer.) And if the building you intend to retrofit already possesses at least some insulation, you can reduce energy consumption still further.

There are also aesthetic considerations. "You can take that metal wall panel, re-skin the existing building and increase energy efficiency, but you can actually rehabilitate the structure so that the old building doesn't even appear to be what it was before," says Jim Ladesich of Butler Manufacturing Company.

A club requires a certain ambience, and racquetball clubs have been moving away from the sweat-shirted jock image and have taken on the atmosphere of the country club, complete with saunas, bar, lounge, restaurant, and a host of other amenities. And you want the exterior of the club to reflect this image.

While pre-engineered steel can itself be attractive, available as it is in a variety of contemporary and warm colors, it can also be combined with conventional building materials. CBS, brick, wood, glass and other components can blend in a continuity of architectural design with the most desirable results.

EXPANSIONS

Pre-engineered steel components can play a role where relatively new buildings are involved as well as in the restoration of old structures. The boom in racquetball is scarcely more than 10 years old. So if you opted for new construction when you opened your club, you most likely do not require any rehab of the exterior. However, you may have underestimated your needs at the time of construction and now find that the addition of 10 courts, or a fitness center, or a slimnastics room could greatly increase your revenue.

If your club is constructed with pre-engineered steel, then an addition is usually quite simple. As Jack Scheimann, Project Communications Manager of Dean Steel Buildings explains, "All you have to do is take the sheeting off the wall and leave everything else in place. The rigid frame is already there. It's simple to go in any direction with steel."

If your building is concrete block,

then the addition of steel is a bit more complicated but certainly a very plausible approach, and likely less expensive with pre-engineered steel than other materials. Scheimann notes that "you might have a problem with air-conditioning — probably a separate cooling or heating unit would have to be set up in that area, but it certainly is not difficult to tie in steel with concrete."

Again, because of the flexibility of steel in blending it with other, conventional, building materials, you can be reasonably certain of maintaining the architectural integrity of your existing club.

COST RECOVERY

How quickly will you see a return on investment? Of course there are too many variables to specify an exact time frame — climatic conditions, membership, complication of construction, etc. Nevertheless, energy savings alone will often make your project viable, and there are less predictable factors that will speed your cost recovery — such as how much your membership will increase because of the new aesthetic appeal you have provided. (Market surveys can be done to give you some idea of what new membership can be expected, but such figures will be less exact than the calculation of energy savings, for instance.)

There are market groups that can help you determine the feasibility of your project, and in many cases the manufacturers themselves can give you an assessment. Corbitt explains that "There are computer programs that allow us to calculate a payback period. Recovery time will depend on the location of the building, use, square footage, and more; all of this is on the computer program."

Pre-engineered steel goes up faster so there is reduced labor cost. There are energy savings, especially when converting older buildings. And there are up front savings on construction materials as the pre-engineered steel is frequently mass-produced. If it is necessary to customize the pre-engineered components, then savings may be reduced somewhat, but without question — even in the case of customizing — pre-engineered steel is a very viable and important avenue to consider when converting or expanding. □

SHOP STRATEGY

By **RON GRIMES** and
SHARON BANZHAF

When a member shops in your pro shop, he is buying a package — the product and the manufacturer, the club and its image, and the salesperson or desk personnel. It is important that your club employee be familiar with the entire package.

There are two critical elements in retailing: 1) the product being sold

(the racquetball merchandise), and 2) the person doing the selling (human resources). So far we have given much attention to describing the product being sold. Even most effectively chosen, the merchandise can be duplicated by your competitors. The person doing the selling, however, is a unique human resource. A club employee who is outgoing with the members, interested in their daily play, pleasant to converse with, knowledgeable about new merchandise in the pro shop, and excited about the club cannot be duplicated. The person who does the selling and interacts with the members in a club is the most conspicuous member of the club organization. The Golden Rule of the pro shop and the club should be — *Happy employees equal happy members*. The employees represent the club and create its image — a key factor.

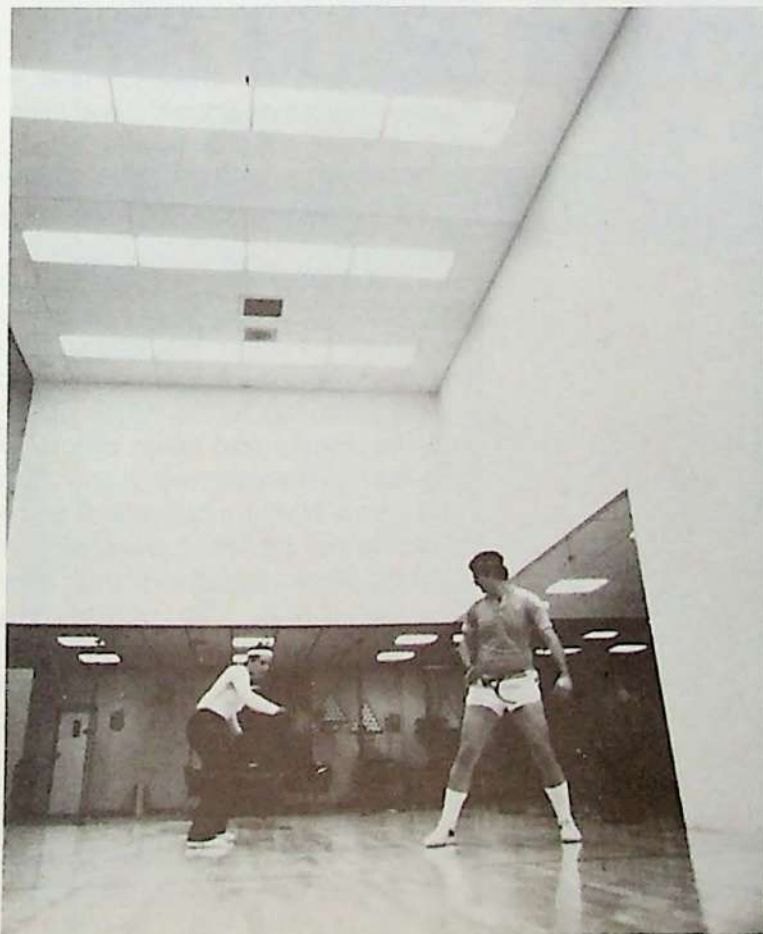
FUNCTIONS OF RETAIL PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Focusing on pro shop personnel and their functions, this article can be more broadly applied to all club

personnel. A person who works in a club is a member of the club family. Each member has specific duties to perform, but, just as in a family, they will aid their peers if the occasion arises. If the whirlpool should overflow and the racquetball professional is not giving a lesson, his unmentioned duty will be to help clean up the mess. The goal of any club employee is to make the member happy. A member, who pays his dues and the club employee salaries will not appreciate a soggy locker room! In hiring club personnel, five basic points should be considered: 1) recruitment, 2) selection, 3) training and development, 4) compensation, and 5) employee services. The basic focus will be towards the pro shop, but remember that these points apply to the hiring of all club employees.

HIRING PRO SHOP PERSONNEL

The club atmosphere is a unique atmosphere. Members are willing and pleased to be at the club. They have made the choice to join the club of their own free will. Unlike a grocery store or a gas station outlet,



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**"Remember the
Golden
Rule —
Happy
employees
mean
happy
members."**

they do not have to patronize the club and pro shop. This basic attitude makes working in a club a pleasant experience. It can be hectic at times, but it is rewarding.

Three Basic Jobs

Hiring an individual to work in the pro shop involves three basic responsibilities: 1) effective salesmanship and handling people, 2) organization and detail, and 3) creativity and imagination. In most cases, the pro shop manager is not solely hired to handle the pro shop. Often, he will also handle desk duties or bookkeeping duties.

Other Duties Attached

It is a rare person who has all three capabilities. A creative person is not usually detail oriented, but more abstract. An organized person may not have the flair to create an enticing display, but he can recite how many racquets were sold on a given day, including size and style. The point being emphasized here is that the pro shop display may be handled by a separate part-time artistic individual who is excited about merchandise. Sales, however, may strictly be handled by the control desk personnel, common in most racquetball clubs.

Attitude

Remember the Golden Rule — *Happy employees equal happy members*. To promote a family atmosphere among the employees, hierarchy should be avoided.

Time

In terms of working time, the pro shop requires varied hourly amounts depending on each individual situation. For example, a brand new club will be receiving all its basic stock, plus the anticipated sales stock *initially* during the opening of the club. Thus, more working hours will be required by the pro shop personnel in ticketing and displaying this merchandise during this period. The amount of merchandise shipped to a club varies with the sales volume and size of the pro shop. The pro shop with greater sales volume needs more merchandise which directly relates to more personnel working hours. A rough rule of thumb for a pro shop with sales volume of \$100,000 or less would require 20 hours of employment on the average

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per week over a one year period. Obviously, the number of working hours fluctuates during peak and slow selling periods.

RECRUITMENT

In merchandising, quality is directly related to cost. In hiring employees, the same factor tends to prevail. Just remember that the person at the control desk, who does the selling for the pro shop, is to the buying public the most conspicuous member of your organization. The member forms his first mental image of your club by his interaction with the desk personnel. Racquetball clubs should place more emphasis on member/employee interaction. In recruiting employees, guidelines should always be established.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In selling, the communication process is essential and it serves a double purpose. The purpose of the retailer is a sale which will contribute to the club's profits. In return, the member responds and completes a message back to the salesperson. The member has an unfulfilled need and making a purchase from the pro

shop will give him the merchandise he desires. A good salesperson can recognize the desire of a potential customer and respond to it according to each individual sales situation. A good salesperson does not force a sale if the message transmitted is not clear.

Five Basics To Retail Selling

The member of your club is your guest. As the pro shop manager, you are the host. Your specific task is to make the member feel at home away from home, specifically, in the pro shop.

The key to approaching the potential customer is to be warm, welcoming, and nonthreatening. Sales are communication. To place the member on the defensive and make him feel ill at ease will break the lines of communication.

There are several ways of approaching your member. The greeting approach is the most traditional and very safe. "Good morning, Mr. Yellen." In a club situation, sometimes it is even more friendly and delightful to the member to acknowledge him by his first name. "Good

morning, Mike."

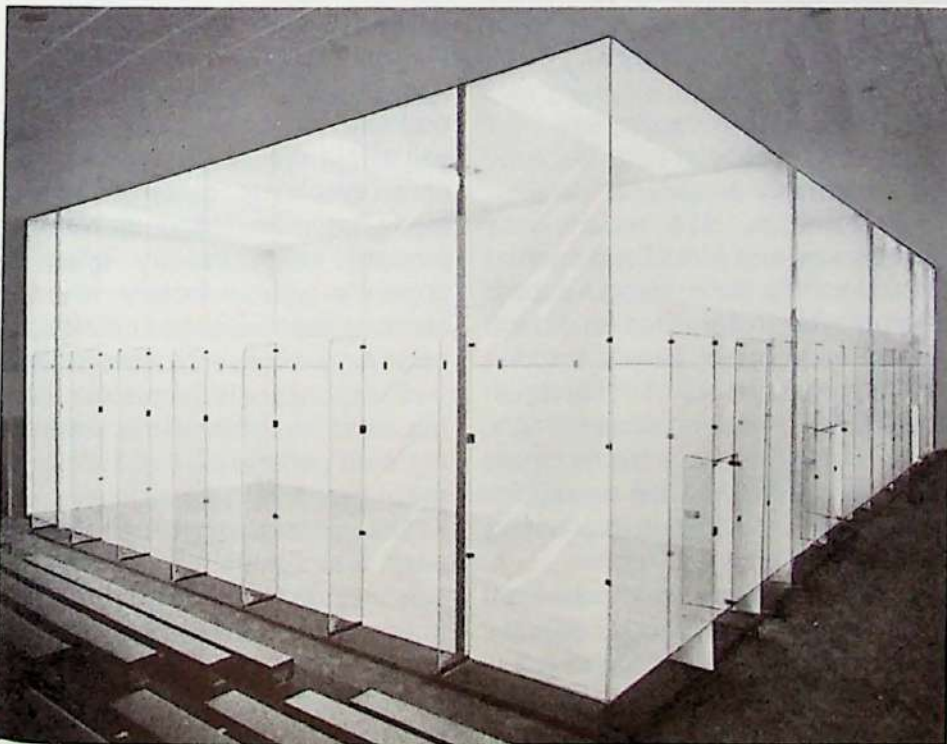
The service approach, or "May I help you?" has become a very negative approach among the nation's retailers. In many cases, the response is "No," and lines of communication between the salesperson and customer are severed. There is no chance for a sales discussion. Eliminate this approach.

The most positive way to acknowledge a shopper is through a discussion of the merchandise available for sale. Appropriately, this approach is called the merchandise approach. Use attention-getting prepared opening statements. For example: "That's an excellent color this fall!" "We just got a special lightweight racquet for ladies!" or "Joan, I thought of you when these coordinate outfits arrived."

The second step in the retail selling process is to determine the customer's needs. Ask questions to obtain information. From this information, make suggestions or specific recommendations to the customer, the third step. For example, Mrs. Fundamental, a new racquetball

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player, is searching for a birthday gift for her husband. Sally Salesperson discovers that her husband is an excellent tournament player, so he obviously has all the necessary playing equipment. One of the new, rugged-looking racquetball bags seems an appropriate suggestion. Sally Salesperson, who takes pride in her pro shop, has a great deal of product knowledge, the fourth step. Sally describes the features of the bag including room for two racquets, a heavy-duty zipper, and a special plastic pocket for wet clothes. Sally expands on the advantage of the bag including the high quality of the brand, its maker and recognized name in the racquetball industry. Mrs. Fundamental is impressed with Sally's sales talk. Sally has helped her to make a buying decision. The fifth step of the retail selling process is closing the sale. The customer is satisfied, and the salesperson is also satisfied.

MORE ADVANCED SELLING SKILLS

The pro shop customer, who makes one purchase, is more likely to make a second purchase. He has a "hidden shopping need" of which he is not aware. Opportunities for suggestion sales come after a first sale and after a return. The suggestions should again be statements, and not questions. Sure-fire sales suggestions to be used in the tie-in or suggestive approach are:

1. *Related items.*
2. *More of the first purchase.*
3. *Items on special.*
4. *New merchandise.*

For example, let's revisit Sally Salesperson and Mrs. Fundamental in our pro shop. Sally, being a superior employee, recognized that Mrs. Fundamental might have a "hidden shopping need." More of the first purchase was ruled out. However, Mrs. Fundamental might need a more feminine sports bag for herself; or one of the new fashionable outfits that just arrived.

Selling-up is another advanced technique in the retail sales process which involves selling a higher quality and higher priced product to a customer who is interested in a general class of merchandise. The category of racquets, in the racquetball field,

fits well into this technique.

Good Customer Relations

The final point in the training and development of pro shop personnel is good customer relations. Another Golden Rule of the pro shop and club should be to *treat your customers as you would like to be treated when you are the customer*. Every pro shop will have merchandise returns from their members for various reasons. A return should be handled in the same way as a sale — straightforward and pleasantly. Good customer relations means *remaining calm* when the customer is excited and *being friendly* when the customer is not. Good customer relations means *smiling* when there is very little to smile about, and *remaining friendly* when the pressure is high. Good customer relations means *acting politely* even when you are very busy, and being courteous to the rudest members at all times. These are good points for the entire club staff as well as the pro shop personnel.

COMPENSATIONS

Payroll procedures for the rest of the club staff usually govern how the pro shop personnel should be compensated. It is important to remember that high-quality merchandise usually costs a little more, but also lasts longer. High-quality pro shop personnel are integral to the image and success of a club. Often, the pro shop manager will function in another aspect of the club, such as activity coordinator or bookkeeper. This also will affect the way in which your pro shop employee receives his earnings. Common forms of wages are straight salary; salary plus sales commissions, or hourly wages. Incentives such as pro shop discounts, court-time discounts, free uniforms, free lessons, or a bonus for increasing sales are other attractions in hiring club personnel.

EMPLOYEE SERVICES

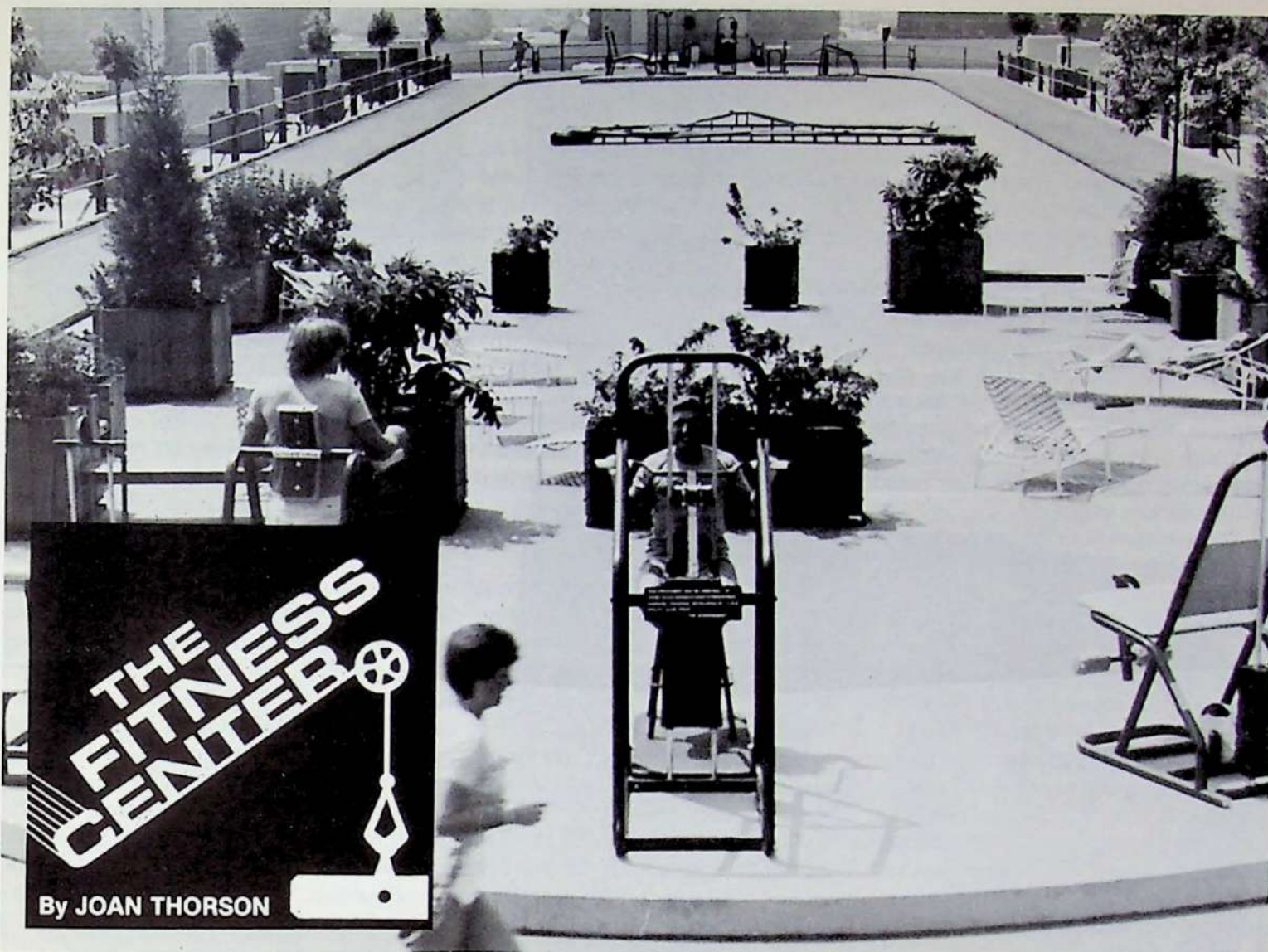
For a club looking for good employees, its automatic services present a very desirable package. The atmosphere of the club with its recreational features, free parking, in most cases the use of a kitchen for lunches, health equipment and whirlpools and available locker rooms are an appealing contrast to an office building. ☐

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THE FITNESS CENTER

By JOAN THORSON

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Racquetball World in Santa Ana, California has a unique feature — a rooftop circuit. It consists of a 1/7 mile track with a cushioned surface to reduce the shock of running, ten single station weight machines treated to withstand the weather and a color-coded light signal pacing system.

In the July/August "Fitness Center" column, I made the point that proper physical conditioning results in greater strength and endurance and pays off in an improved game. From the premise that club members who are in excellent shape will enjoy racquetball (and your club) a lot more, I introduced a series of articles about proper conditioning.

The first article dealt with preparing the muscles for activity through proper stretching techniques. It gave exercises designed for racquetball (adapted from *Stretching*, © 1980, by Bob Anderson). This time I will explain a total aerobic and strength workout that takes only 30 minutes and will develop maximum cardiovascular efficiency, strength, endurance, flexibility and all-around fitness.

Recently, I toured Racquetball

World's facilities in Santa Ana, California and interviewed Chuck Coker, National Club Consultant and developer of Racquetball World's aerobic program.

Racquetball World is a large facility both in terms of its services and its membership. Twelve thousand people use its 35 racquetball courts, men's and women's weight training rooms, rooftop circuit gymnasium, sports medicine clinic and swimming pool. But 4,000 of those people go to the club *exclusively* to exercise in the weight training rooms and on the new rooftop circuit.

Coker is enthusiastic about aerobic and circuit weight training. A former U.S. Olympic Decathlon coach and coach of 23 Olympic medalists, he summed up its advantages in this way: "This is really an advanced

method of training. In the shortest period of time, it will produce the greatest amount of results. So, if you're looking for overall muscle strength, cardiovascular endurance, muscle stamina and flexibility — it can all happen with aerobic and circuit weight training."

QUICK, WHOLE BODY CONDITIONING

The Institute for Aerobics Research in Dallas, Texas, developed the concept of combining aerobic activities with circuit weight training. This concept is designed to bring about peak whole body conditioning as quickly and effectively as possible.

To begin the aerobic/weight training circuit, club members should do some stretching exercises, then warm up on an exercise bike, treadmill, etc. to raise the pulse rate to a

target training level. They then perform the first exercise for about 30 seconds (generally 15–20 repetitions lifted at moderate weight: 40–50 percent of maximum one-time lift for the average person; 50–70 percent for the trained athlete). They should concentrate on making their muscles contract explosively throughout the entire range of motion. Breathing should be rhythmic, the exhalation taking place as the weight goes up, inhalation as the weight returns.

After the first exercise, the club member must perform 30 seconds of aerobic exercise. This can include jogging, running in place, skipping rope or using an exercise bike, treadmill or indoor jogger.

Three entire circuits are performed in this manner, alternating 30 seconds of weight lifting with 30 seconds of aerobic exercise. There are no rest intervals; the club member must exercise at a relatively fast pace and maintain a high heart rate throughout the workout.

The aerobic/weight training circuit alternates upper and lower body exercises to help maintain a high heart rate. In setting up this circuit, you should therefore make sure that two consecutive weight training stations do not employ the same group as pri-

mary agonists (movers). You will want to alternate muscle groups in a predetermined order so that muscle fibers are allowed to recover between exercises.

A word of caution here — as for all exercise programs, people need to be realistic about their current level of fitness and what they are capable of doing as a consequence. Untrained persons should not attempt the aerobic/weight training circuit without a physical examination, being familiar with lifting techniques and being progressively preconditioned to the stress of circuit weight training. Club members should start this exercise program slowly and be supervised by a club trainer.

SOMETHING UNIQUE — A ROOFTOP CIRCUIT

The circuit at Racquetball World in Santa Ana, California, is located on the roof and is open to the sky. It consists of a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile running track and 10 single station weight machines. Five weight machines are located at each end of the track. Club members run on the track for aerobic activity between exercises.

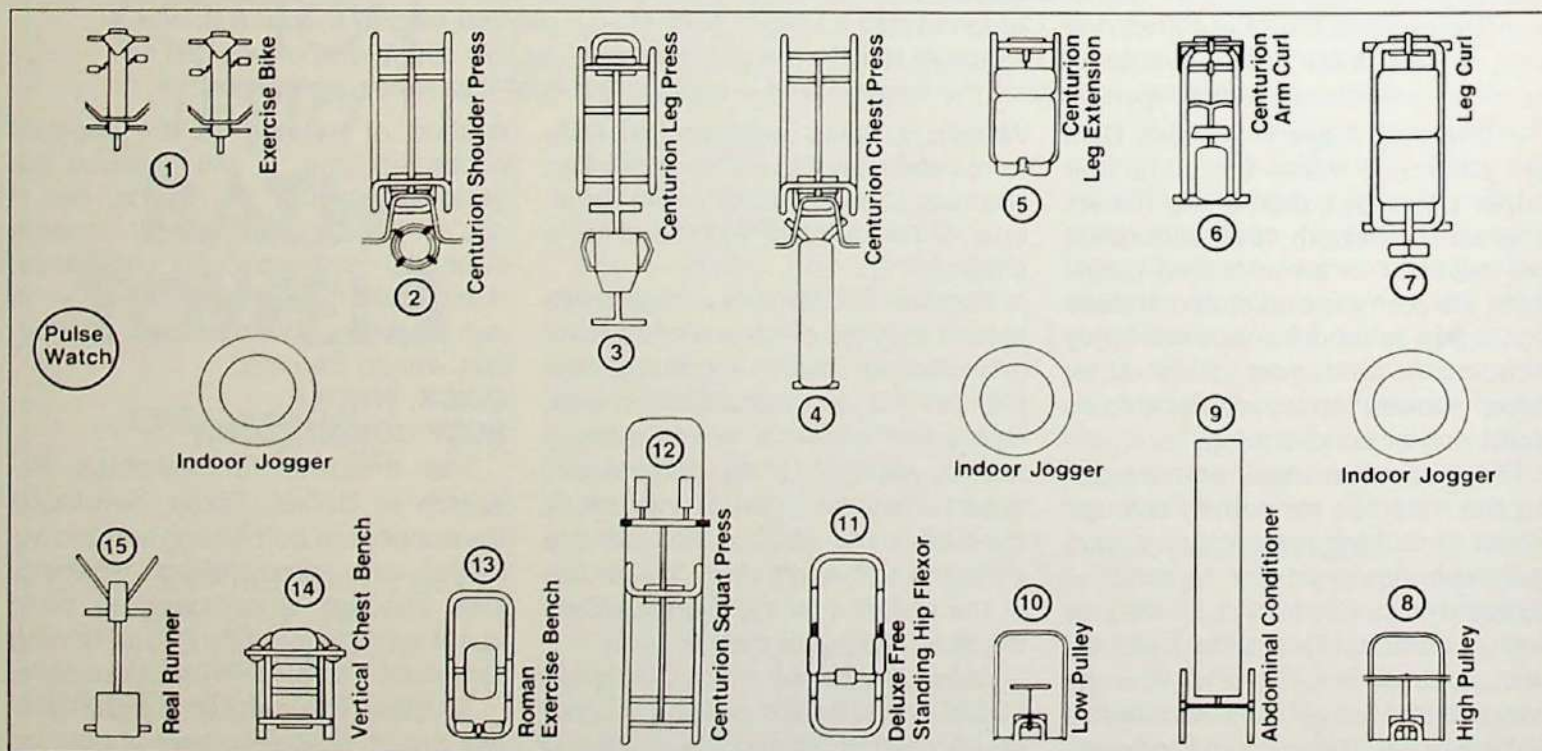
The track is made of ground up rubber tires suspended in a synthetic rubber material. It cushions the body against the shock of running.

The weight training equipment has a special finish and waterproof upholstery to guard against the weather. A light signal pacing system, much like conventional traffic lights, runs along the outside perimeter of the track. Runners who see the red light flash as they pass, for instance, know they are running a seven-mile (green = nine-minute mile; yellow = 11-minute mile).

Racquetball World has made the roof aesthetically pleasing by adding trees, shrubbery and various types of flowering plants. Lawn furniture is clustered in the center of the track for those who want to relax or sunbathe at the end of a workout.

The popularity of Racquetball World's exercise facilities — both the rooftop circuit and the men's and women's weight training rooms — is proven by the fact that 4,000 people come there *only* for the purpose of exercising. And, on a square foot basis, exercise facilities generate substantially more revenue than racquetball courts. For those two reasons, Racquetball World in Santa Ana plans to convert three courts into expanded exercise facilities. Similar plans are in the works for the Fountain Valley, California, Racquetball World. 

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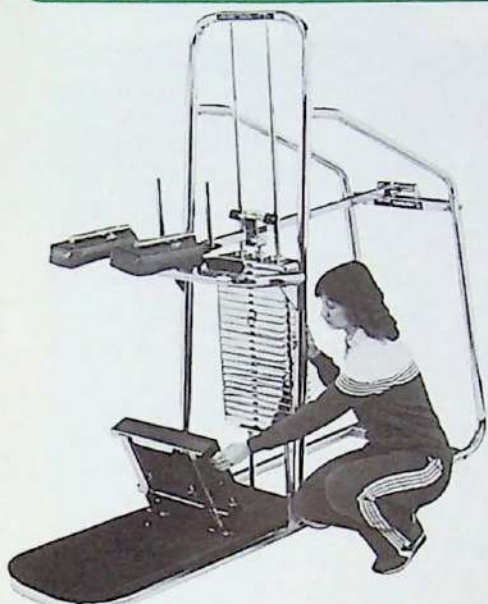


This is a typical aerobic/circuit weight training layout. The exercise stations, numbered in sequence, are arranged to alternately condition upper and lower body muscle groups. The circuit incorporates the use of aerobic exercise equipment — bikes, indoor joggers or treadmills.

new PRODUCT TIPS



ENVOYS U.S.A., INC., marketers of KangaROOS pocketed athletic and casual footwear, recently introduced the KangaROOS racquetball shoe which features a side pocket in each shoe to provide the player a safe place for a locker key, spare lace, cash, or identification.
Reader Service No. 204



A built-in, flip-up toe raise exercise platform converts the Leg Squat machine from UNIVERSAL GYM EQUIPMENT CO. into a calf and ankle stretching and strengthening unit. It is available in regular and competitive weight models.
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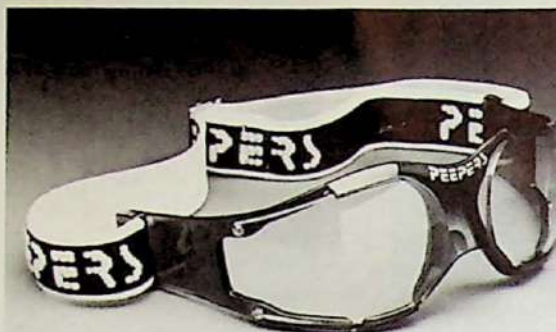


A new freestanding counter display featuring ATASCO leather grips for tennis and racquetball racquets is now available from TROSTEL LEATHER PRODUCTS, INC. The display, which measures 1½ feet in diameter by 3 feet high, holds up to 72 packages.
Reader Service No. 213



CRISS OPTICAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY's newest frame, MAG 1, features a new bridle strap concept. The neoprene self-adjusting strap hinges to the front in such a way that the frame offers advantages for sports, industry and general utility.
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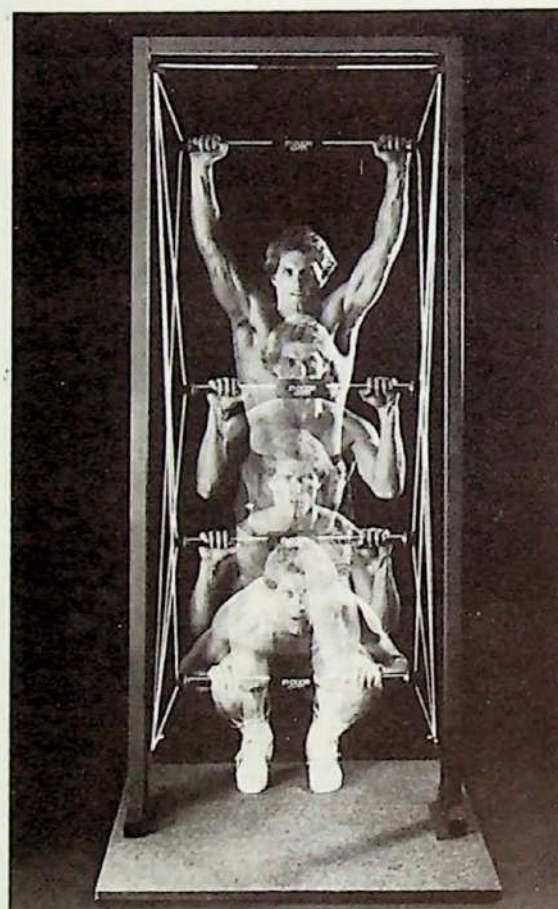
new PRODUCT TIPS



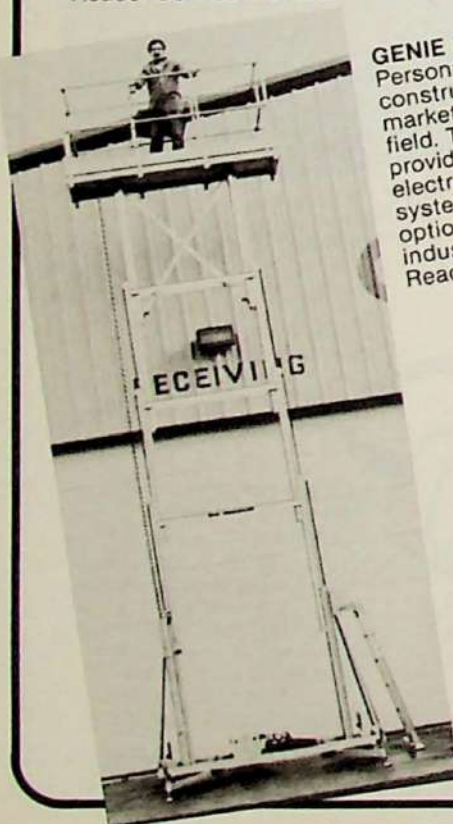
A wraparound design offers the player total action viewing with **PEEPERS INC.** racquet sports eyeguards. To prevent them from becoming dislodged, each optical quality lens has been placed over the frame rather than in it, which also helps prevent fogging.
Reader Service No. 172



Strength and deflection readings on a newly-developed racquetball racquet frame are recorded by Harry Draper in the prototype test laboratories of **TRUE TEMPER SPORTS, INC.** Two new frames have been designed by the company: one of high-alloy steel and the other, high-alloy aluminum.
Reader Service No. 220



A modestly-priced alternative to building a full weight room is the In-Door Gym by **MONO-KINETIC ENERGY EQUIPMENT**. It offers a wide selection of workouts that can be tailored to the rigors of every user's needs.
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GENIE INDUSTRIES' Dual Personnel Lift is used in construction, the industrial market and the institutional field. The lifting power is provided by a 12-volt DC electric hydraulic chain drive system. There is an AC model option when a 30 amp industrial circuit is available.
Reader Service No. 210



A new lightweight racquetball shoe, called "Racquetball," was recently introduced by the Edge Shoe Division of **TENNIS TOGS**. The upper is 60 percent suede leather and the rest, nylon mesh. The sole is a special pattern designed specifically for racquetball out of solid gum rubber.
Reader Service No. 235



By NORMAN FIXEL

Socks and accessories are potentially high profit items that very often receive too little attention in the pro shop. You need to give attention to display, to locating the items in the right place in your shop, and to knowing the needs of your members in order to take advantage of the profit potential of this merchandise. In particular, socks can account for a significant percentage of your total shop sales with the right merchandising strategy.

Socks are bought on impulse. To create frequent impulse purchases, they should therefore be located in high traffic areas of your shop. The front counter or near the cash register are two high traffic areas that would naturally stimulate the impulse to buy. An eye-appealing display rack on the front counter, a free-standing floor display near the door,

or a wall display in a high traffic area are sure to boost sales.

The manufacturers themselves often provide display racks, or if you choose, you can make your own wall display unit. You want to match your shop's decor, naturally, and if it is appropriate, a display constructed from wood can be particularly eye-catching. The warmth of the wood can be particularly appealing. The warmth of the wood tones and the beauty of the wood grain will almost act as a magnet for attracting customers, and they will gravitate to the merchandise.

You should display your socks so that each style and color is visible to your customers. Your customers will decide to make the purchase on impulse, but once they decide to buy, they will likely be selective in choosing the item. They may, for instance,

61

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want a coordinated look. A man may want maroon striped socks to match his maroon shorts, or a woman may want pastel blue anklets to match the blue piping on her shorts and top.

You should also display socks so that your customers can touch and feel them. Proper display appeals to as many of the senses as is appropriate, and in the case of socks, an appeal to sight and touch are basic. Do not display socks under glass. People want to feel the softness of the sock and the thick softness of the

cushioned sole. Sales of socks are made through sight and touch. Effective displays located properly in the store can aid these appeals to the senses and substantially add sales to your sock program.

While sales of socks are frequently made on impulse, they can be further stimulated by aggressive (though courteous) sales techniques of your staff. Salesclerks should be trained to always inquire into customer's needs whenever they purchase apparel or shoes. Position a

sock display in your shoe department to suggest the complementary purchase to the customer, and back this up by having your clerks remind the customer of your offerings in socks. In this case you are seeking to create multiple unit sales from add-on items, and socks are an easy add-on sale product.

You can also create multiple sales of socks by themselves. Instead of selling one pair, try a special three or four pair price. For example, if you sell socks for \$2.50, a special three pairs for \$6.95 price should increase your business. Your staff should again play a role here. They should tell the customer, once he or she goes to purchase a single pair of socks, that a special three-pair price is available. And, of course, signs in your store should also advertise the bargain.

Basic to your profit picture and sales of any merchandise is knowing your clientele. There is a demand today for cotton, orlon, and wool socks, as far as different kinds of material are concerned. Men and women also have distinctive preferences of styles: a selection of tube and crew styles for men should be offered; padded anklets, peds, and possibly tubes should be offered for women. Plus, it is important to have a wide variety of colors. Which styles and which materials are preferred at your club can only be determined after you have analyzed your members' needs — both through informal surveys in conversation and through analysis of your previous year's sales. Such information is vital when you place your buying orders.

Finally you should realize that sport socks are worn for many casual activities and not just sports-related activities. Your shop should be capable of filling the need for all-around wear, and should be geared to more than just meeting the needs of those players who happened to have left their socks at home.

Remember: the way to increase your sock business is by merchandising a quality product, by offering a variety that will meet your customer's needs, and by displaying them in the proper location in an eye-appealing manner. 

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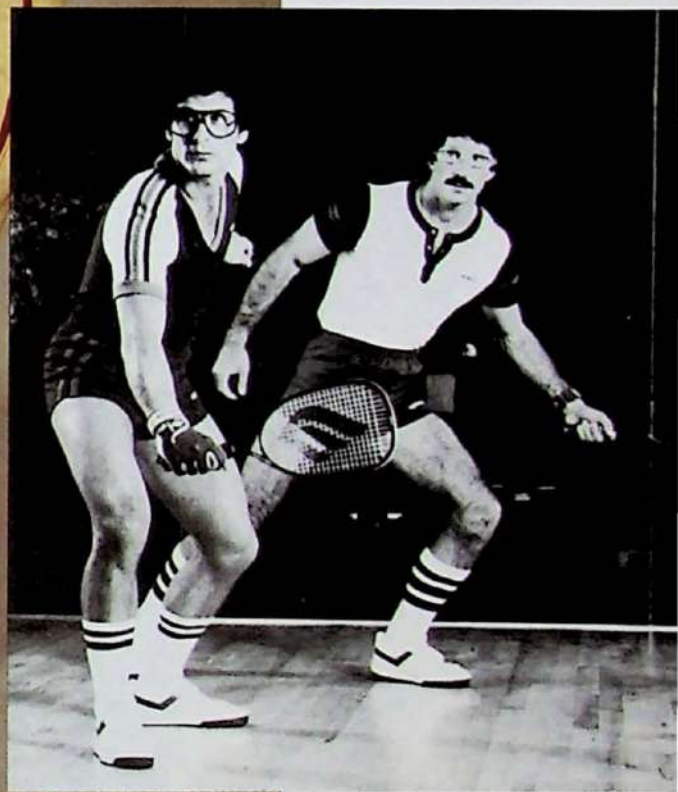
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These ladies' fashion mid-weight warmups are presented by **ACTIVIMAGE**. Two-pocket jacket has full zipper with contrasting rib collar, bottom, and sleeve cuffs. Pants have elastic waist and hemmed leg cuffs. Reader Service No. 120

EKTELON'S newest men's Pro shirts include the Wallace Beery collar with snap placket front (right), and the new triple-striped men's Roll-Out shirt with raglan shoulders (left). Shirts and shorts available in variations of kelly, navy, and French white. Reader Service No. 175

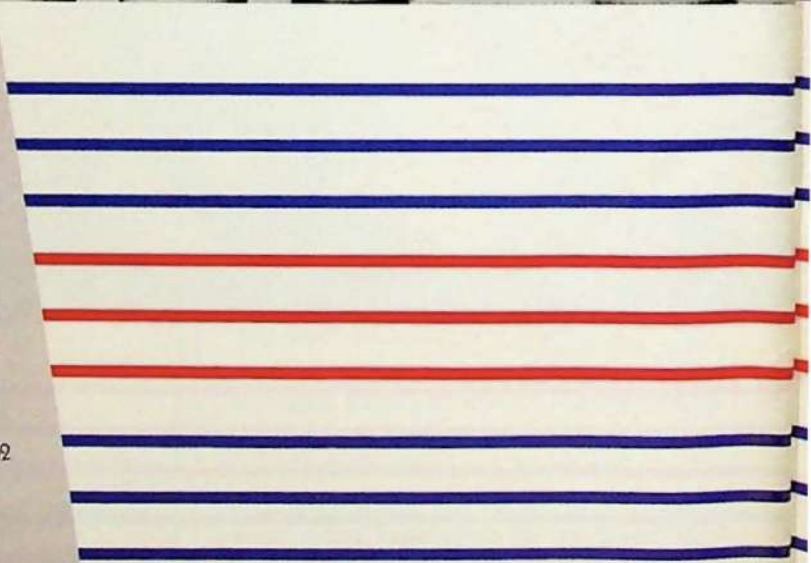


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Cloud Nine collection.
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with the player in mind.
Reader Service No. 126



FASHION MOVERS



You'll be on target with these ladies' Gunmetal separates from
JACAR. Acrylic/cotton warmups feature color-coordinated trim
and piping, embroidered logo, and more to put your members
in style.
Reader Service No. 305

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