

The Racquetball Reporter

Winter 1996

Volume VI Issue 1

Huczek captures two gold medals at Junior World Tournament

At the International Racquetball Federation World Junior Championship, Jack Huczek captured both the singles and doubles titles for the 12 & Under division. The event was held at Los Caballeros Sports Village in Fountain Valley, California, December 16-20, with over 250 participants in attendance.

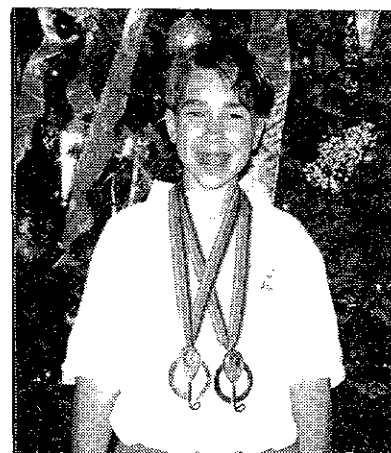
In team competition, the U.S. Junior Team successfully defended the World Junior Cup, outscoring the second place team of Mexico, and Team Canada in third. Rounding out Team competition were Israel in fourth place; Argentina fifth; Columbia, 6th; Ecuador, 7th and Bolivia in 8th place.

Throughout the tournament, none of Jack's opponents challenged him until reached the finals against Matt McElhiney, who took him to a tie breaker, McElhiney won their first game 15-13, Huczek redeemed himself by winning the next two games 15-8 and a stunning 11-1 tie breaker.

In doubles, Huczek teamed up with Matt McElhiney for a decisive victory of Steven Klaiman (Houston, TX) and Corey Martin

Kenosha, WI) with scores of 15-8, 15-14.

The singles victory marks a total of four consecutive World titles for Huczek in addition to his five consecutive National Singles Titles. Michigan is proud to have one of the fastest rising stars in racquetball, a true competitor, who constantly strives to be the best, and who gives back to the sport by running a successful Junior Program at his home club. Way to go Jack!



Above, Jack Huczek poses with his two gold medals won at the Junior World Championships.

1996 AARA Leadership Conference draws racquetball administrators

Over sixty of the country's most experienced racquetball leaders converged on the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado to attend the annual AARA Leadership Conference.

The group is made up of primarily state association directors who administer AARA programs at the local level throughout the year. Additional program officers from the Boards of directors of those same state associations are also on hand, along with industry representatives from the sport's most influential companies.

The purpose of the conference is to "brainstorm" on how to keep the great sport of racquetball on the move. Make it a point to talk with the president of your state association so your concerns can be carried to the national level.

Information submitted courtesy of the AARA

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View of the President

by W.T. Blakeslee

I recently attended the AARA Directors meeting this past January in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Some of the highlights are as follows: Probably the most exciting announcement was the plan for an expanded US Open in November. The Open will be a \$100,000 Pro-Stop with a \$10,000 first place prize and ESPN-2 TV coverage. Our own Jim Hiser and Doug Ganim are beginning to plan this major event. Next year all the regionals are being planned for a single date which should be April 21, 1997, the week before the State Singles.

In other news, The Racquetball industry suggests sales are flat, not depressed. Ball sales are up

slightly and believe it or not, almost 1600 racquetball courts were constructed last year. The Rebie Sorey event in January is Illinois' biggest event and drew almost 400 participants and 50 from Michigan. The AARA still has strong hopes that racquetball will be in the Olympic Games in the year 2000.

Local news: Ken Bonnett still runs the only tournament stop in Michigan and please continue to support his events. Chris Cole won the prestigious "Diplomas of Honour" award in Rome, Italy in December. Chris has recently thought about returning to Michigan in the summer to work on a master's degree. Jack Huczek won the Boys 12 Singles and Doubles crown at the World Ju-

nior Games. Congratulations to both!

We still need help on our RAM Board and you can help by renewing your AARA membership and convincing a friend to join.

See you on the hardwood!

Flint GMI Hosts Exhibition

by W.T. Blakeslee

November saw perhaps the finest racquetball talent Michigan has to offer converge at General Motors Institute. Organized by the RAM Board, Jimmy Floyd, Mike Johnston, Nick Rallis, Melody Gomo, Laura Patterson, Marta Rubcich and Jack Huczek all participated in the event at my alma mater. Ektelon hosted the event by donating several racquets as door prizes. The clinicians received expert technical schooling & advice. In the new field house, one of the exciting moments proved to be Jimmy Floyd and Mike Johnston playing to the audience of well over 100 GMI students. The students were thrilled with the women's ability to play. Finally, Jimmy Floyd played all the clinicians for a new Eketelon Catalyst racquet, challenging any player to win one point against him for the racquet. In the end,

Michigan player wins gold at AARA National Doubles

RAM would like to extend congratulations to Michigan's Mike Stephens who, along with partner Shelley Ogden (Cincinnati, Ohio) captured the gold medal at the Ektelon AARA 28th U.S. National Doubles Championships in the Mixed Doubles 45+ division.

Stephens and his partner fought hard to beat former Michigania Jim Hiser and partner Gerri Stoffregen by scores of 15-7, 6-15 and 11-8.

The event was held this year in Phoenix, Arizona. Congratulations Mike!

Racquetball One Series ready for 1996

Where is racquetball headed in 1996? After nearly twenty years of playing and conducting tournaments, I am very frustrated with the decline of our sport. Very few new tournament players, and many of the "old" regulars are off doing other things. 1996 will bring several new changes for the Racquetball One Tournament Series. Beginning in October all Racquetball One Tournaments will be one-day events. Some of these events will be strictly doubles play. Again round robin play will be the format. Players will receive one meal and the shirt will be optional. Cost for the one day round robin event will be around \$35 with a shirt, \$29 without. The price is always a factor! What can you do on a given Saturday for six to eight hours where you mix it up playing a minimum of five matches at

some of the countries finest

1996 RACQUETBALL ONE SERIES

February 17-18th

Grand Rapids MAC

March 16-17th

Lansing MAC

April 13-14th

National Health & Racquet Club
Petoskey

facilities, get a bite to eat, and even a quality shirt if you choose that option? The one-day event should allow players to omit the lodging expense, and spend Friday and Sunday with their families.

Please direct any suggestions or comments to me at (616) 554-4820.

**The RAM newsletter
needs you!**

Anyone is welcome to submit articles, information and pictures for publication in *The Racquetball Reporter*.

Send items to:

The Racquetball Reporter
2834 Yale St.
Flint, MI 48503

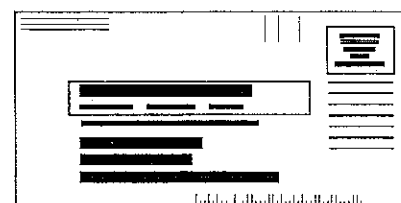
Mark your calendar!

Region 9 Adult/Junior Regional

March 8-10

Hall of Fame Fitness Center
2700 Roberts Ave. NW
Canton, OH 44709

For information call Doug Ganim, (614) 890-6073



Cole honored for sportsmanship

Michigan's former top Men's Open player was recently tapped by the International Committee for Fair Play to receive one of only thirteen "Diplomas of Honour" to be awarded to athletes worldwide. The sole athlete of the group, Cole was invited to take part in the official awards ceremony in Rome, Italy last December.

The citation came as a result of an incident at the 1994 U.S. Olympic Festival in St. Louis, where Cole called a double-bounce service retrieval against himself at match point in his semi-final against Scott Reiff. Referee Otto Dietrich had ruled the serve return good, but Cole

stopped the rally to overturn the call and concede the final point to Reiff.

But the match had meant much more. By giving up the point, Cole also sacrificed a possible re-appointment to the U.S. Team (earned by the event winner), plus the opportunity to defend his 1992 world championship title the following month. The U.S. Olympic Festival had been the last qualifying event prior to the VII World Championships -- where Cole had hoped to defend his 1992 World Singles crown. By his act, both the team spot and any chance for a title defense were lost.

Cole was awarded the American

Amateur Racquetball Association's "John Halverson Fair Play Award" in May of 1995 in recognition of his conduct and was the AARA's nominee to the U.S. Olympic Committee for its annual "Jack Kelly Fair Play Award." Coverage of his action was also featured in USA Today and the U.S.O.C. Olympian magazine.

From international headquarters in Paris, Secretary General Janusz Piewciewicz of the Comité International pour le Fair Play requested that Cole join the elite group of 15 laureates in Rome to receive the well-earned accolades.

Published courtesy of the AARA

1996 Racquetball Association of Michigan Tournament Calendar

January 12-14	Brighton Athletic Club
February 10-11	Total Sports Mt. Clemens
March 11-12	Region 9 Singles Canton Ohio
March 17-19	Racquetball One Grand Finale East Lansing MAC
March 30	Women's and State Singles Warm-up
April 13 & 14	Racquetball One Tournament Petoksey
April 20, 21	RAM State Singles Championships

Seniors tourney a big success

The 7th annual Midwest Seniors Masters Racquetball Tournament was held November 11-12, 1995. The tournament was held at the Total Sports Club in Harrison Township, Michigan.

This tournament is for men and women who are 35 years or older. It is played on a round robin format and a match is two games to 11 points. Each player competes in five matches or more and there are no referees.

There were 60 people in the tournament, some of which traveled from Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Canada. Many of the age division winners won by just a few points and were not decided until the very last game was played. Johnny Northern, in the Men's 40+ and Ray Huss in the Men's 50+ both played eight matches and never lost a game the whole tournament. Our hats are off to these two players because this is not an easy task.

Highlighting the tournament was a buffet style banquet and auction, which allowed players to socialize while also purchase some nice racquetball supplies.

At this time I would like to thank PENN, who has sponsored every tournament. Thanks also to Ed Straetmans, the manager of Total Sports, for allowing us the use of his club. Lastly, thanks to all those who participated.

The 1996 tournament is scheduled for November 1-3, with a site to be announced later.

Seniors/Masters Tournament Results

Men's 35+	1st place	Keith Tidd (OH)
Men's 35+	2nd place	Dan Verbeck (MI)
Men's 40+	1st place	Johnny Northern (MI)
Men's 40+	2nd place	Bill DeLuca (MI)
Men's 45+	1st place	Andy Butterbaugh (IN)
Men's 45+	2nd place	Claude Hadley (Canada)
Men's 50+	1st place	Ray Huss (OH)
Men's 50+	2nd place	Tom Perna (OH)
Men's 55+	1st place	Ron Hutcherson (IN)
Men's 55+	2nd place	Paul Becker (MI)
Men's 60/65	1st place	Elliott Rott (MI)
Men's 60/65	2nd place	JD Driver
Women's 35/40/45	1st place	Laura Patterson (MI)
Women's 35/40/45	2nd place	Judy Sands (OH)



Ron Hutcherson captured first place in the Men's 55+ event, while Paul Becker (left) took second place

1995 State Doubles draws many

The RAM State Doubles tournament, held December 2 & 3, 1995 in Ann Arbor was again a huge success. Well over a hundred players participated in the annual event held at the One on One Athletic Club.

The highlight of the event found last year's champions Jimmy Floyd and Ryan Covell being defeated by Mike Johnston and Nick Rallis. Mike and Nick played solid "blue collar" racquetball and seemed to be in control of the entire match. Jimmy's crowd pleasing antics and spectacular shot celebration was an additional highlight to the match.

Overall everyone enjoyed the event. Thanks to all sponsors and to those who participated. Comments and suggestions for next year's event can be directed to any RAM Board Member.

Mark your calendar for the future RAM sponsored events: The Womens's and State Singles Warm-up event to be held March 30 and the RAM State Singles event to be held April 20 and 21, 1996.

1995 RAM State Doubles Results

Men's Open

Nick Rallis/Mike Johnston def. Ryan Covell/Jimmy Floyd

Men's A

Dave Flaska/Dale Bushing def. Kie Young/Ray Emerson

Men's B

Marv Riley/Mark Niedzielski def. Ron Papke/Deave Erdman

Men's C

Bob Wood/Bob Finkleman def. Diego Pizzo/Al Petric

Men's 25+

Jack White/Jess Graves def. Bill Deluca/Dave Bushing

Men's 30B

Tom Penny/Roland Leal def. Diego Pizzo/Al Petri

Men's 35+

Jack White/Jess Graves def. Jim Panasiewicz/Chris Kelly

Men's 45+

Ken Bonnett/Bob Gravelyn def. Tom Brownlee/Tom Blakeslee

Women's Open

Kathie Trotter/Jan Insko def. DeLois Leapheart/Laura Patterson

Women's A

Karen Green/Sharon Huczek def. Sue Papke/Nancy Rintz

Mixed Open

Jack White/Sandy White def. Scott Pufahl/Kathie Trotter

Mixed A

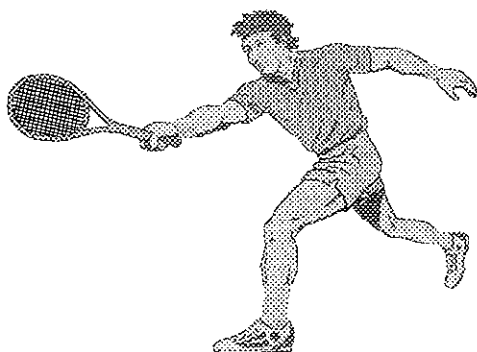
Mike Stephens/Melissa Daniel def. Larry Panetta/Karen Green

Mixed B

Ron Papke/Sue Papke def. Mike Eastrope/Diane Trombley

Mixed C/D

Vince Callahan/Nancy Rintz def. Judy Porter/Ron Cunningham



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

RAM STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

APRIL 20 & 21, 1996

For details contact Tom Blakeslee (810) 468-2787

How well do you know racquetball?

1. The greatest number of racquetball players are in the:
 - a. North
 - b. South
 - c. East
 - d. West
2. In which of the following sports is racquetball not a full-medal sport?
 - a. Pan American
 - b. The Central American Games
 - c. The World Games
 - d. The World University Games
 - e. The Pacific Rim Championship
3. The AARA was founded in:
 - a. 1972
 - b. 1968
 - c. 1962
 - d. 1978
4. Keith Calkins first became president of the AARA in:
 - a. 1972
 - b. 1984
 - c. 1980
 - d. 1990
5. The only athlete to ever win the National High Schools, National Juniors, National Collegiates and World Juniors:
 - a. Sudsy Monchik
 - b. Jason Mannino
 - c. Michelle Gould
 - d. Shane Wood
6. The person who won the most consecutive national titles in one division is:
 - a. Mary Low Acuff (W65+)
 - b. Bud Muehleisen (M45+)
 - c. Michelle Gould (W/O)
 - d. Claire Gaufreau (W60+)
7. The coach of the first Junior National Team was:
 - a. Jerry Hilecher
 - b. Jim Hiser
 - c. Stu Hastings
 - d. Chris Cole
8. Which of the following is not included in the AARA Hall of Fame:
 - a. Ed Remen
 - b. Joseph Sobek
 - c. Robert Kendler
 - d. Charlie Garfinkle
 - e. Ed Andrews
9. The first certified referee in the U.S. was:
 - a. Mike Arnolt
 - b. Otto Dietrich
 - c. Jim Easterling
 - d. Jim Hiser
10. The highest level of event in the United States is:
 - a. Open Tournament
 - b. National Invitational
 - c. National Championship
 - d. State Championship

Answers: 1) b; 2) d; 3) b; 4) c; 5) d;
6) d; 7) c; 8) d; 9) d; 10) c



Jack Newman

Lynn Adams

Andy Roberts

Ruben Gonzalez

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Natick, Massachusetts
Longfellow Sports Club

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Dates

January 6 - 7
508-653-4633

Location

Chalfont, Pennsylvania
Highpoint Athletic Club

• Advanced Players Only •

Dates

March 2 - 3
215-822-1951

Minneapolis, Minnesota
Northeast Racquetball Club

January 20 - 21
612-572-0330

Manchester, New Hampshire
Executive Health & Sports Center

March 23 - 24
603-627-4552

Richmond, Virginia
Robious Sports & Fitness Center

February 3 - 4
804-330-2222

Detroit, Michigan
Courtland Racquet Club

April 13-14
810-254-1055

Denver, Colorado
Lakewood Athletic Club

February 24 - 25
303-989-5545

Sarasota, Florida
Sarasota YMCA

April 20 - 21
813-957-0770

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EVENING PHONE (____) _____

LEVEL OF PLAY _____ LOCATION/DATE _____

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**AARA medical, life and liability insurance at sanctioned events*

**Four issues of the RAM newsletter, The Racquetball Reporter*

**Six issues of the AARA national publication, Racquetball Magazine*

**RAM sanctioned tournament entry forms mailed to your home*

**Eligibility to play in all sanctioned tournaments and receive state and national ranking points*

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(DONATIONS TAX DEDUCTIBLE)

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_____ \$15.00 Junior Competitor

_____ \$10.00 Junior Competitor (without Racquetball Magazine subscription)

_____ \$15.00 Racquetball Magazine subscription only

MAIL TO: RAM, 3152 S. Henderson, Davison, MI 48423

Racquetball Reporter

The Racquetball Reporter

3152 S. Henderson Rd.

Davison, MI 48423

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State Doubles Results

Jack Huczek wins Junior World Title

Racquetball One Tournament Series Updates