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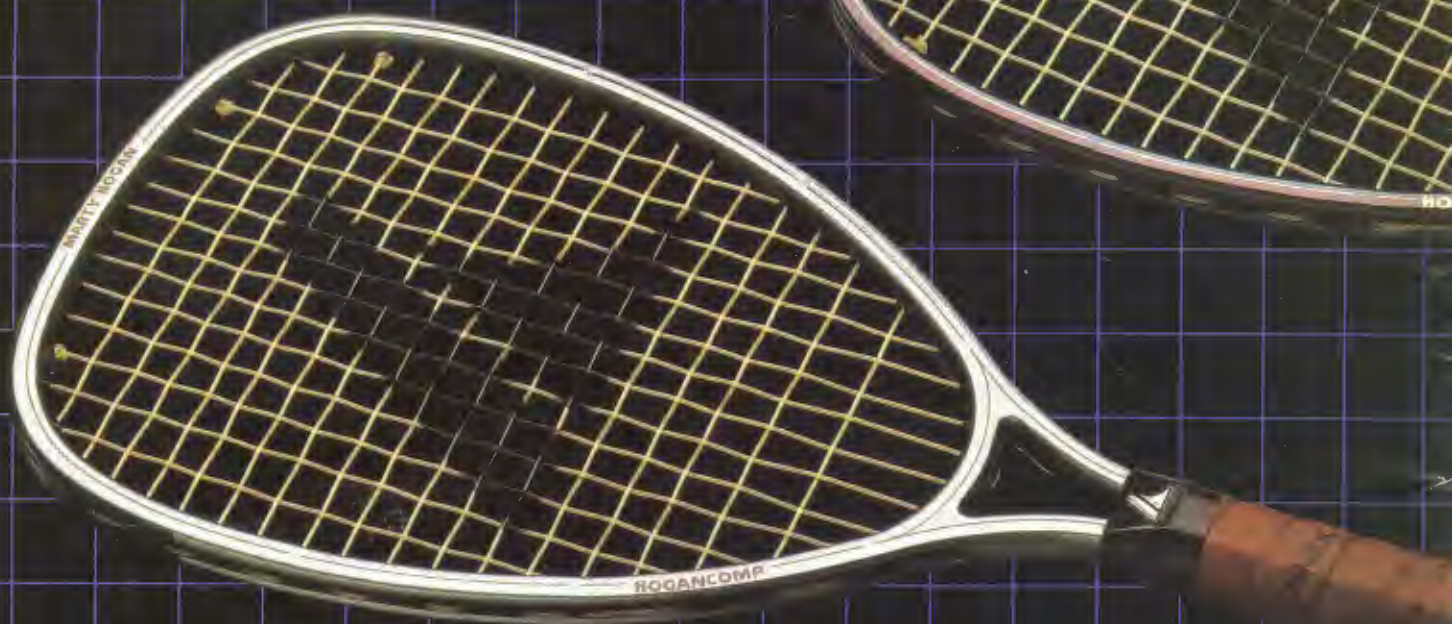
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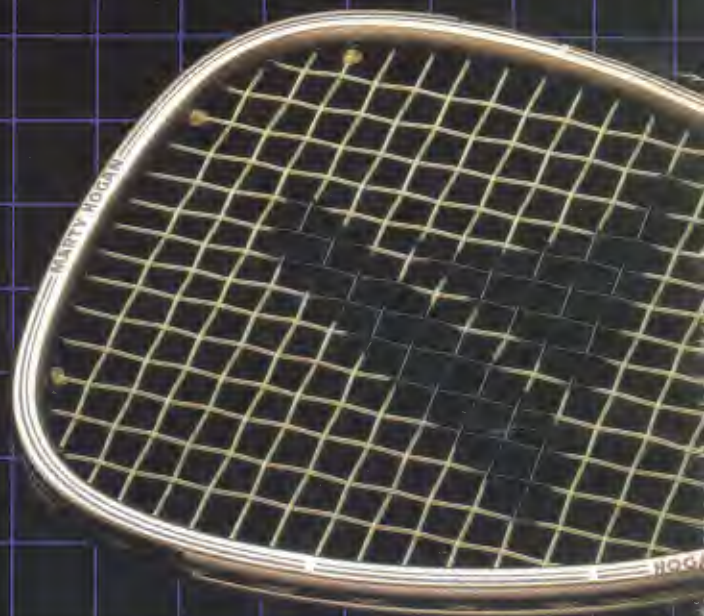
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On the cover...

Insurance magnate Robert MacDonald is featured this month and how he uses racquetball as his athletic outlet to release tension and get that great workout in a short period of time. For MacDonald's views on insurance, racquetball, and the pro tour, turn to page 9.

Photo by Arthur Shay

Next Issue...

January brings an interview with the one and only Eleanor Quackenbush, and her racquetball rollicking parrot, plus full results of the U.S. National Team's excursion to Quito, Ecuador to compete internationally for the first time on foreign soil. Plus all of our regular, features and departments.

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Publisher

• Hugh Morgan •

Associate Publisher/Editor

• Chuck Leve •

Associate Editor

• Linda Catanzaro Boberg •

Fitness Editor

• Jean Sauser •

Travel Editor

• Victor Block •

Contributing Editors

• Lynn Adams • Charlie Garfinkel • Gigi Horn •
• Mark Kessinger • Steve Mondry •
• David C. Pizarro • Vince Wolanin •

Fitness Consultant

Jacque Hooper

Design Director

• Milt Presler •

Circulation Director

• Judi Bayer •

Photographic Consultant

• Arthur Shay •

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A Bum Rap



It had been a while since I'd seen top flight doubles competition. Too long, in fact. If I'm not mistaken, Marty Hogan still had pimples and Bud Muehleisen was still playing "Open" when I last saw really good doubles.

That all changed October 26-28 when I took in the AARA National Doubles Championships at the Court House, Boise, Idaho. Now Boise may be a bit of trip to travel for a tournament—but it was worth it!

And I came away with one definite conclusion: For years doubles has taken a bum rap! It's time to tell the truth about doubles: It's a great game.

Sure, we've heard it all before. Doubles is dangerous. It's too crowded in the 20x40 box. Yet I saw only one injury in three days (Andy Roberts got hit in the back of the head with the ball) and that was not serious (he only needed seven of his allotted 15 injury minutes and begged off two Tylenol).

What I did see was dynamic action, beautiful teamwork, power and finesse (especially in the older age categories), great shotmaking and thrilling matches. The truth is that doubles makes singles about as exciting as, pardon me, Flop, Saturday night in Boise. There's just no comparison.

It takes better shots to hit winners in doubles, making the game more challenging than singles. It takes better strategy to formulate winning game plans making the game more challenging than singles. It has the element of teamwork that must be satisfied in order to win, making doubles much more challenging than singles.

What's particularly enjoyable, and somewhat amusing, is watching great singles players trying to play doubles. Back in the 1970's when singles and doubles were often played at the same tournament, it was fun to see the great singles players struggle to maintain on-court discipline.

Perhaps only Charlie Brumfield and Muehleisen were the only truly great singles and doubles champions.

In order to play doubles safely and well, of course, one needs to follow the rules.

No, not merely those found in the latest edition of the AARA policies and procedures. I'm talkin' about the *unwritten* rules of doubles. There are only four:

- **Offensively—think safety first.** Never even consider swinging if there's a thread of a chance of hitting anybody with your racquet or the ball. We used to say, "When in doubt, hold up." Actually we mean, "Don't even get in doubt."
- **Defensively—think safety first.** Get out of the way—it's your job. There's no room for macho here. Players dislike hurting someone as much as they dislike being hurt themselves. When in doubt—hit the floor. No string sandwiches, please.
- **Have a plan.** It's vital to know what's going on out there and how you and your partner are going to react in a given situation. Clearly defined court coverage patterns and game strategies make for much safer playing no matter what the level of competition. This means you must *think* as well as hit—to me, that's the essence of doubles' superiority over singles.
- **Wear eyeguards.** If you don't, you shouldn't be on the court, singles or doubles. And while I neither saw nor heard of one instance of anybody being hit in or near the eyes at the National Doubles, why take the chance?

Doubles is truly a great game. There should be many more doubles tournaments and I hope the AARA expands its Doubles Regionals concept to parallel its flourishing Singles program.

So come out of the closet all you doubles lovers! I know you're out there! Let's start making waves for move doubles actions. ●

Chuck Lane

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Letters

Fitness

Dear Editor:

I wanted to drop you a line to commend Jean Sauser on an excellent inaugural fitness section in the *October* issue.

I finally finished my Master's Degree in Exercise Physiology/Nutrition last December and really appreciate the time and effort it took to research and write such a great section.

Congratulations again on a super job!

Gigi Horn
Dallas, TX

Dear Editor:

We receive your magazine here at our YMCA. We allow our members to read it, for we feel that the articles can help them improve on their game. When we received your *October* issue, we were quite interested in your new section pertaining to fitness, for we feel that the YMCA is a leader in this field.

Upon reading the section, the other Physical Director and I were appalled to see your fitness expert, Ms. Jean Sauser, grabbing her neck to find her

pulse! This is something we do not allow in our classes.

Sure, the pulse is easy to find at the carotid artery, but this could lead to problems. Once pressure is applied to the artery, it can result in a fall in arterial blood pressure and heart rate. Therefore, you would be getting a false reading, and may risk fainting.

Areas of the body we encourage using include the radial artery, temporal artery or solarplexus to name a few. Our suggestion to you might be to have these types of articles reviewed by someone in the sports medicine field (i.e. exercise physiologist, cardiologist) before you advocate certain procedures.

Alice DeVine
Mark Greene
Lenawee County YMCA
Adrian, MI

Thanks for your concern and interest in our new fitness section. You'll be happy to know that we are using an expert, Jacque Hopper, a graduate of Washington State University (Master of Science with an emphasis in Exercise Physiology) and certified by the American College of Sports Medicine as an Exercise Test Technologist.

Additionally, we are sorry if you misinterpreted the picture of Jean Sauser taking her pulse reading. She is placing her fingers on her neck (not grabbing it) as was described in the article.

We fully understand and agree that at no time should pressure be applied to the carotid artery. However, we feel that if the fingers are simply placed on the carotid artery, a safe, easy and accurate pulse reading can be obtained.
—Ed.

Appealing Thoughts

Dear Editor:

This is in response to your *October* editorial concerning regulation of the appeal rule ("I Appeal...").

While I agree the appeal in almost all upper level matches has become a nuisance because of abuse, careful thought must be taken before attempting to regulate this useful process. A hasty rule enactment could possibly eliminate the purpose and intent the appeal process serves.

I favor the "automatic appeal" on

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game-point as you suggested. This is a good idea.

Concerning the number of appeals permitted in a game, is three sufficient? What sort of penalty, if any, should be given if a player appeals more than three times? If both players agree to a new referee and/or line judges, will their "appeal counter" be reset to zero?

How about considering five appeals (lost) within a 15 point game? Winning an appeal has no effect on the number of appeals remaining. If a sixth and subsequent appeal is made and won, there clearly should be no penalty. However, a sixth appeal which is lost would result in a "Referee's Technical" thereby taking a point from the offending player.

The five allowable appeals should be in effect for the duration of a game and any changes in referee or line judges should have no effect on number of appeals.

In doubles, each team should be allowed a total of five appeals.

For 11 point games the number of appeals permitted should be reduced to three. I don't think it would be difficult to redesign the referee's scorecard to include an area to mark off appeals.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on this needed rule addition.

Michael Watson
Englewood, OH

Dear Editor:

I just received my copy of *October's* issue today.

Concerning the appeal idea—I think your proposed rules are excellent.

Bob Fitzgerald
Tecumseh, OK

Dear Editor:

I agree wholeheartedly with your appeal idea in the *October* issue. Your system sounds like a damn good one. The only way the sport will become successful with the public is without interruptions that bore the spectator.

I see only three problems that would need to be eliminated:

1. Have the linesmen chosen carefully so that no "friends" of the competitors are in linesman positions.
2. Educate your linesmen better with regard to the rules.
3. Make the avoidable hinder appealable allowing the players to appeal it as many times as they want.

I hate to see one player take advantage of another by purposely standing in the way of an offensive shot that is sure to be a winner. We need to put racquetball back in perspective: It's a game of skill—not a game in which one tries to be more clever at cheating than his opponent.

Appeals are important, and I agree with regulating them, but not to the extent that they create loopholes for players who wish to degrade the sport by adopting this "win at all costs" philosophy.

Karen A. Clark
Phoenix, AZ

While I appreciate your agreeing with me, I disagree that avoidable hinders should be appealable. A tough referee will eliminate avoidables; once a player thinks he might get away with an avoidable by appealing, you'll see nothing but avoidables with a "maybe I can get away with it through appealing" attitude. —Ed.

Balls, Balls, Balls!

Dear Editor:

Your humor article in the *June, 1984* issue asked for good, useful ideas for old racquetballs. Well, let me bounce this one off you. What about racquetball art?

As an example, I have enclosed a photo of my racquetball pyramid. This masterpiece of 506 balls, weighing over 60 pounds, elicits the same response as a Picasso.



Also included are photos of my racquet-stack and just the beginning of a handball pyramid. As you can see, my success in finding old handballs has been less than rewarding. Any sources you or your readers might have for obtaining handball art material would be of great assistance to me. Picasso, move over.

Neal J. Scheyer
Northbrook, IL

Tripping In South America

Dear Editor:

I read with interest the series of articles by Carole George on her South American trip with Steve Keeley. Three comments follow:

1. As her good friend, it was nice to hear about her latest adventures.
2. As an Open racquetballer, I read with interest the growth of racquetball in South America.
3. Finally, as a practicing mental health professional, in regard to the dangerousness of Carole's trip, please urge her to seek help before it's too late!

Mitch Smith
Hanover, PA

Frisbee Anyone?

Dear Editor:

I am writing in regard to the article, "Training Aids For Racquetball," in the October issue.

It was great to read about how the frisbee flying disc was incorporated into teaching basic techniques in the backhand racquetball stroke.

I am a professional frisbee disc player who enjoys playing and using racquetball as an alternative sport to flying disc competition.

Over the past three years my racquetball game has improved to a high B or low A level. My success has come from the vast improvement in my backhand.

I do many shows, demonstrations and clinics with the frisbee disc. When teaching someone the backhand throw, I try and relate it to a tennis or racquetball stroke. The techniques in both require: 1) cocked wrist for snap to produce spin; 2) hip rotation to produce added power.

My backhand stroke has increased in power because I throw power throws in events such as distance, disc golf, self caught flight, and freestyle. All of these events require snap and hip rotation for consistent success in disc throwing.

Tim "Chico" Mackey
Winona, MN

More On Kids

Dear Editor:

I'm writing in response to your September editorial "Kids Go Home."

I work at Rose Shores Racquetball Club, Roseville, MI. There are plenty of

DRESSED TO KILL.

No other glove fits so well and feels so sleek, while it improves your grip for deadly accuracy.

Head's supple Cabretta leather acts like a second skin. It breathes so your palm stays dry and your racquet doesn't slip. Leather's natural non-slip surface maximizes your grip, too. And it keeps its shape, game after game.

Velcro tab adjusts easily for a snug fit.

Expandable nylon mesh on back and between fingers guarantees a good fit — no bunching or slipping.

No exterior seam on the index finger. So there's no rubbing or chafing when you play.

HEAD GRAPHITE APEX



kids in our club. We encourage juniors to play by offering a fine juniors' clinic complete with one hour of instruction plus half hour of challenge courts.

During the summer we also have a clinic with instruction. To top this off, we have a special court fee for juniors in the class and a student rate of \$6 at any time all year 'round.

We have two great instructors who play and compete themselves. They also encourage their students to enter tournaments.

Have no fear! Someone *is* concerned about junior players.

Denise Bammel
St. Clair Shores, MI

Dear Editor:

First of all, I'd like to thank you and Carole George for the super article you did about me in last *January's* issue.

I just thought you might like to know about the youth involvement we have here at the Kenner YMCA. This past summer I was very involved in organizing a youth league with kids ages 11-16. From this league emerged great

friendships and matches at later times.

The league was so successful that it evolved into a new and plentiful fall league. The children also took many clinics and lessons this summer, helping their game a great deal.

In January we plan to have our first Kenner YMCA Club Tournament in which I will provide a youth division. We're very excited about the interest the kids have in racquetball because these are very definitely the racquetball players of the future.

Thank you for your concern, and I hope my letter helps in some small way.

Renee Herbert
Kenner, LA

National Racquetball Magazine
4350 DiPaolo Center/Dearlove Road
Glenview, Illinois 60025

The Great Scorer

The boy, about ten, was a picture of dejection. He sat cross-legged on the grass adjoining the courts where the Pee wee Racquetball Tournament was in progress.

"Lost, huh?" I ventured.

"Yeah," he responded. "Billy Smith beat me."

"Well, son," I said, trying to cheer him, "winning isn't all that counts, you know. Remember, as a wise man once said, 'When the Great Scorer comes to write against your name, He'll note not whether you won or lost, but how you played the game.'"

"I guess so," he said.

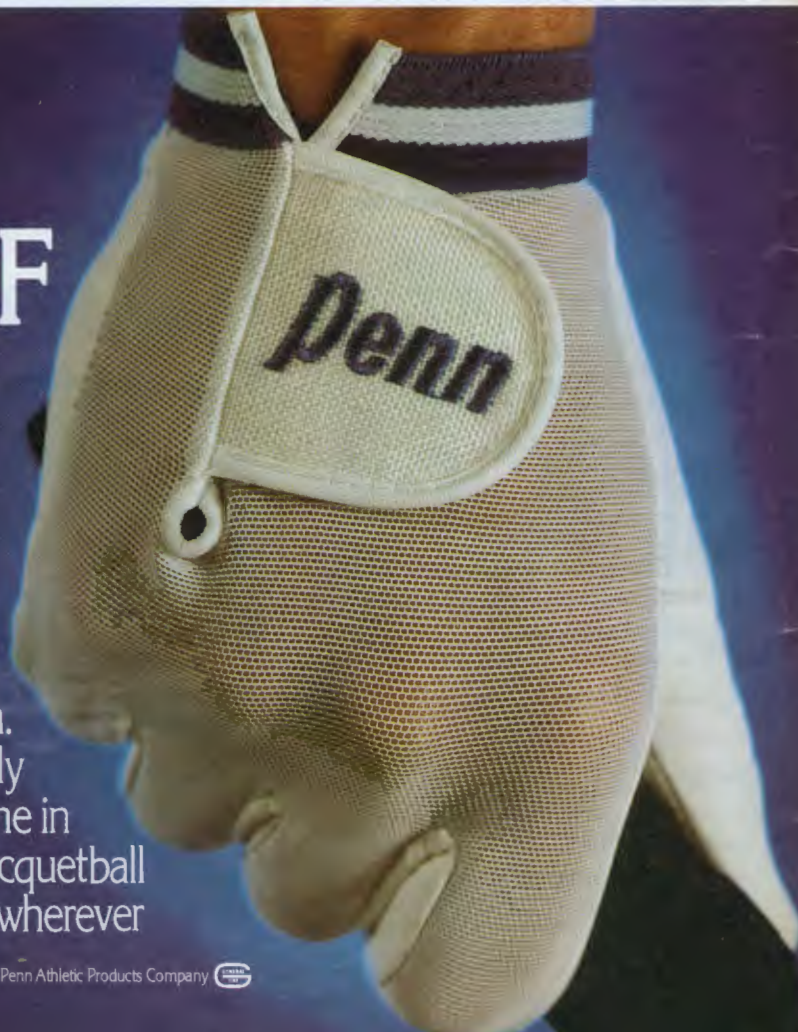
"And you know *who* the Great Scorer is, don't you?" I asked:

"Sure," the lad said. "Billy Smith. He beat me 11-9, 11-7."

—John B. Klein

IMPROVE YOUR GRASP OF THE GAME.

Pamper your hand with the softest sheepskin leather. Experience the comfort of seams you'll never feel. This is the glove that fits like skin. And grips like steel. The only glove worthy of the first name in racquetballs. The all-new racquetball glove from Penn. Ask for it wherever Penn racquetballs are sold.



Penn Athletic Products Company

Robert MacDonald: This Is No Mistake



MacDonald's forehand is one of his strengths. He's got the good form and follows through well.

He remembers when he and his family first moved to Minnesota. Being a jock of all trades and wishing to be a model citizen, he decided to involve his family in the local sport — skiing.

"I walked into the sporting goods store and I said, I want to take my family skiing," said Robert (Bob) MacDonald, president of ITT Life Insurance. "The guy called me into the back room and told me to take a \$100 bill and flush it down the toilet."

"If you can do that," said the sporting goods salesman, "then you can get into family skiing."

It was then that Bob MacDonald knew that racquetball, which he had been playing, was going to continue to be his family sport.

Robert MacDonald, 41, shocked the insurance industry in January of 1982 by announcing that ITT Life Insurance Company, of which he was president, would no longer sell whole life insurance policies, policies which accounted for more than 90 percent of his firm's business.

"There was a fair amount of hate mail," says MacDonald.

Among those who were unhappy with the announcement were the over 600 ITT sales agents who were certain that their boss had lost his marbles. They saw their own sales and incomes certain to be hurt. And the first few months were dismal as ITT peddled its term insurance-invest the difference policies. However, by 1981 ITT was more than back on its feet with annual sales volume of over \$50 million.

A good portion of those sales are to athletes because of ITT's entry into the 'good health' type of insurance — insurance that gives additional coverage bonuses to non-smokers and otherwise healthy persons.

It should come as no surprise that MacDonald has combined sports and insurance for they are his two loves. A racquetball devotee since 1974, MacDonald professes to have attempted almost every sport, settling on racquetball for his primary source of athletic workout.

Starting out as a handball player at the Santa Ana YMCA, MacDonald quickly picked up the trend to racquetball, joining the Los Angeles Athletic Club and getting into a twice a week game, still his normal workout schedule.

"I've never been any good at any sport," says MacDonald. "I was a mediocre intramural player — that was about it. My problem was that I'm not very big and I've always been slow."



At 5'7, 195 MacDonald doesn't lie here, although his on-court movements are a lot quicker than he would have opponents believe. A hard-hitting forehand and tough ceiling game enable him to stay close to most opponents. But his primary attribute is his burning desire to excel, to achieve, and yes, to win.

"I love challenges," he said. "And I love to work out. Since I don't have a great deal of free time, racquetball's the perfect sport for me since I can get that super work out in a short period of time."

Within the past two years, MacDonald attempted to combine his love of racquetball with his insurance acumen — putting together a program to sell his term (with good health bonus) policies through clubs. And while the program did not meet with company expectations, MacDonald, as usual, is undaunted.

"I think we ran into a problem at the club level," he explains. "The clubs were reluctant to distribute their customer base and I don't blame them. The customer joined the club to play racquetball, not to get harassed by insurance people."

"In those days, only nerds were into debate and speech," he says. "All my friends were jocks."

"By 1980 whole life wasn't being particularly well received by the public," he says. "It was pretty obvious something had to be done. If we had waited for the rest of the industry, we'd still be waiting. So I made the decision to stop selling it, it's not a good product."

For movement within the same organization, the employee must be able to perform the job and meet the minimum requirements for the position. If the employee is not qualified, the employer must provide training or other assistance to help the employee meet the requirements. If the employee is still not qualified, the employer may consider termination.

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INCREASE
MUSCLE?**

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ITT Life Insurance Company

ITT

A former tennis player, MacDonald's overhead ceiling game is also effective.

He smiles proudly as he tells the story, ending as he often does, with a one-liner.

"My wife has given me a plaque for my office wall," he says. "The plaque reads, 'If you're being run out of town, get in front of the crowd and make it look like a parade.' This is the kind of philosophy we took with our term insurance policies."

While the insurance industry may not like MacDonald or his style, his maverick reputation is one that he relishes, not disdains.

"They've said I'm too aggressive," says MacDonald, "but they don't say I'm wrong."

On the racquetball court, MacDonald takes his workout as seriously as he does his insurance business. His burning desire to do well and get his workout causes him to carry his racquetball gear on almost every trip, business or pleasure.

"They love to challenge the little, ol' fat guy," he laughs. "I love to watch their faces when they see that I'm not too bad."

"I love the competitiveness of the game. I never feel that I'm out of a match. I have good endurance — I don't get tired."



His forehand and overhead shots are definitely his strong points, while his backhand could use a bit of restructuring. But he goes after everything and, particularly in his age category, will give many players a real rough time.

One other aspect of MacDonald's position that interacts with racquetball is his potential role as a sponsor of major racquetball events, a subject that he has thought a great deal about. He's seen the sport on ESPN, been to tournaments, and has even been solicited by influential racquetball people to coach up for a pro tour.

"Part of the problem is that I don't see racquetball lending itself to attracting big crowds," he says, repeating what many in racquetball have heard all too often. "And I don't think it plays well on television, at least not yet."

While retrieving is not one of his stronger suits, MacDonald's determination is. Translation: while he may not get to it, he'll give it his all trying.



"I think one problem is that they don't give you the whole match, they snip out bits and pieces which disrupts the flow. From a corporate standpoint, I don't think it's a good buy, yet."

"On the other hand, I think the sport is going to only get better. I think it will increase in participation, just by its very nature. If someone or some company could grab onto it early and hang on, like Virginia Slims did in tennis, then you might have something."

While the pros may not turn MacDonald's drive into high gear, the junior players do get him riled up, more as a participant, though, than as a potential sponsor.

"We've got to get the kids started much earlier," he says. "In order to develop the next generation of players, we have to do what tennis, golf, football, and baseball have done — provide junior development programs. I know it's a long term payoff for the clubs, but in my opinion, it must be done."

That's Bob MacDonald, always speaking his mind. ●

Photos by Arthur Shay

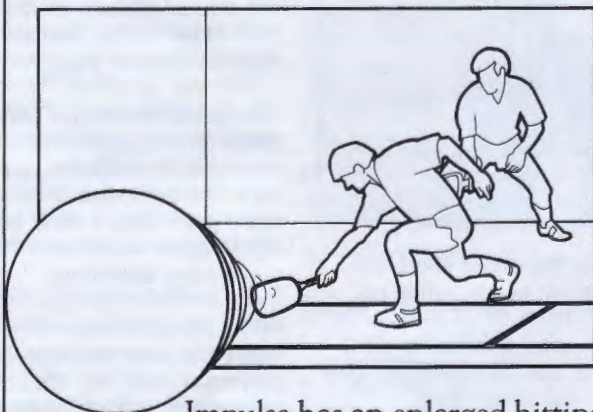
"I'D LIKE TO INTRO I'LL PROBABLY REG

You know what really separates somebody who plays racquetball from somebody who wins? Power plus control, that's what. And now Head has designed this new racquet to help you put it all together. It's got built-in power. And it's engineered to give you that all-important control.

It's called the Impulse, and it's a high-performance racquet that'll help you give somebody like me a run for my money.

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As you move into the big league you're going to find that the really good players are full of surprises. But Head's



Impulse has an enlarged hitting surface so you get a bigger sweet spot. That means you can get a piece of even the meanest shots. And once your opponent knows you're committed to getting your racquet on absolutely everything he's gonna start to sweat. Believe me, I know.

**HEAD'S IMPULSE HAS A
SLIM PROFILE THAT'LL HELP YOU
CUT THE BALL OFF AGGRESSIVELY.**

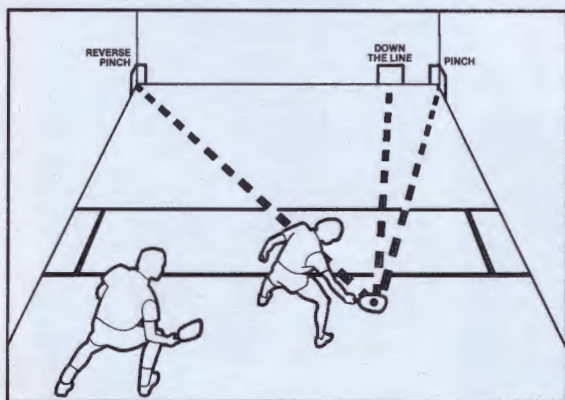
In the competitive world of advanced racquetball, you have to be aggressive to



Steve
Strandemo,
racquetball
professional,
teacher, and
author of
Advanced
Racquetball.

DUCE A RACQUET RET INTRODUCING"

win. And the Impulse is designed to help with the most aggressive shot of all—the cut-off. The Impulse's aerodynamically slick profile gives you really quick response

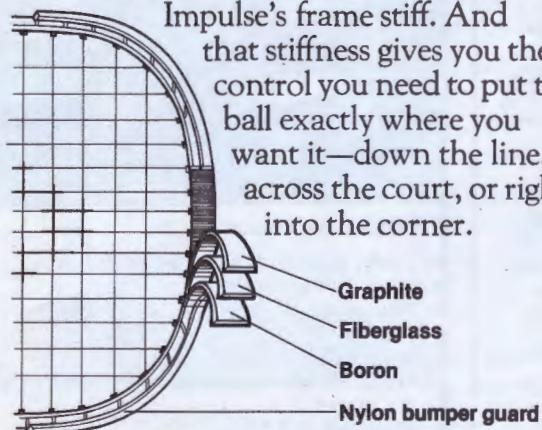


Be aggressive. Cut off a "left-up" shot with a quick racquet like the Impulse. You'll have a lot of offensive options and control of center court.

and great maneuverability. So as soon as you see a chance to cut off a shot, your racquet is in position to get the job done.

HEAD'S NEW BORON/GRAPHITE IMPULSE HAS A STIFF FRAME TO HELP YOU RUN ME ALL OVER THE COURT.

The tougher the opponent, the more important it is to keep him on the move, off-balance, and out of center court. And the Impulse is designed to help. You see, Head uses a unique combination of boron, graphite and fiberglass to make Impulse's frame stiff. And that stiffness gives you the control you need to put the ball exactly where you want it—down the line, across the court, or right into the corner.



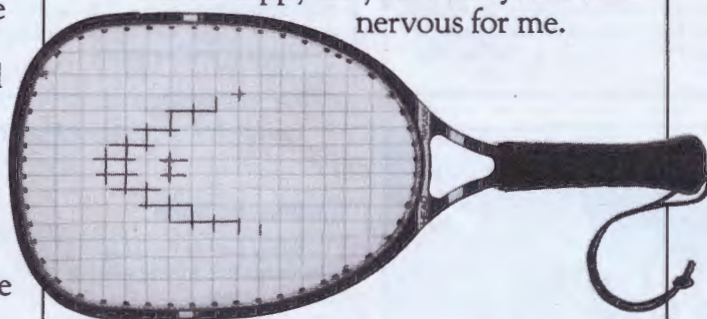
HEAD'S NEW IMPULSE CAN HELP KEEP YOU ALIVE, EVEN WHEN I HIT A KILLER.

When you've scrambled to get a piece of a tough cross-court pass, the last thing you need is a racquet that twists on impact. That's why the Impulse gives you

built-in reinforcement *against* twisting with its special integrated throat design. So even when you catch the ball off-center, you have the control and the power to keep it alive. (And that gives you one more chance to go for a winner.)

THE BORON/GRAPHITE IMPULSE IS NOT EXPENSIVE EITHER. SO YOU INTERMEDIATE PLAYERS CAN AFFORD TO IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF BEATING ME, IMMEDIATELY.

Now that you see how the Impulse can help you take the next steps in improving your game, you probably understand why I'm so happy for you. And just a little nervous for me.



We want you to win.

For free product information write: AMF Head, P.O. Box CN-5227, Princeton, NJ 08540

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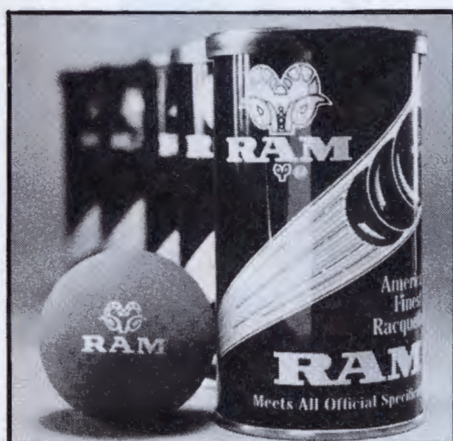
National Racquetball's Annual Ball Guide

Your One Stop Comparison Guide

Well, one thing you can say about racquetballs: They're all blue!

Otherwise, according to the manufacturers who answered our call for pictures and information on their products, there's a lot of difference in speed, velocity, liveliness, and consistency.

We invite you to look at what's available on the market. Our thanks to the manufacturers who took the time to send us their product information.



Ram Racquetball

- Precision, high performance blue ball
- Ideal speed and consistent rebound
- Standard guarantee for breakage
- Endorsed by Marty Hogan, Five time National Racquetball Champion
- Ball used by Marty on all his tours
- Suggested Retail Price: \$3.98 per can



Speedflite by Ektelon

- Advanced rubber formula
- Thin wall construction
- Consistent off your strings and off walls
- Not sluggish or sloppy
- Not too fast
- Manufacturer will replace if ball breaks before signature wears off



Pinch Shot by General Sportcraft

- AARA approved
- Perfectly round
- Consistent in bounce
- Long playing
- Official size and weight
- Two balls in a colorful can



Ultra-Blue by Penn

- #1 selling ball in the U.S.
- Pressureless construction for long, lively, consistent play
- Exclusive "double performance" guarantee: If ball fails before the label wears off, Penn will replace with two new balls
- Approved by the AARA
- Official ball of: AARA Regional/National Singles Championships, 1980, 81, 82, 83, 84; AARA Regional/National Junior Championships 1981, 82, 83, 84; AARA Inter-collegiate Championships, 1980, 81, 82, 83, 84; World Games I and II
- Suggested Retail Price: \$4.50



TruBLUE by Wilson

- Lively, consistent bounce
- Long lasting durability
- Play tested by nationally recognized players
- Medium/fast speed
- Pressureless can to retain its bounce in or out of can
- Approved by AARA
- Official ball, 1984 U.S. National Doubles Championships
- Packaged two balls per can

THE TONGUE WILL FALL OUT BEFORE THE SIDES BLOW OUT.



When a shoe comes apart on the side, where the uppers and the bottoms come together, it's called a blow out.

Other companies don't talk about blow outs because, frankly, they can't do much about them.

We're bringing it up here because we've developed a special bonding process that helps prevent blow outs in our Yamaha Asahi court shoes.

Like other companies, we start out by buffing the areas that are going to be joined.

But next we use an exclusive chemical etching process that greatly increases the surface area of the leather and rubber that's going to be bonded.

Then we use a unique bonding compound that was developed by our

own Asahi chemical engineers.

The result is a bond that's so tough, blow outs are all but eliminated.

Of course, there's a lot more going for Asahi court shoes than the way we put the uppers and the bottoms together. There's the uppers and the bottoms.

Our high-grade leather uppers give you lateral support. So your feet won't roll over on you when they get tired.

And our bottoms are actually composites of two kinds of rubber. Tough synthetic rubber in the high wear areas—the heel, ball of the foot and toes. And lightweight natural gum rubber everywhere else. Because nothing beats gum rubber for traction and shock absorption.

Our shoes also have two layers of EVA cushion in the midsole. A soft layer next to your foot for comfort. A firm layer next to the sole for shock absorption.

If you want tough, comfortable shoes that will help you get the most out of your game, get a pair of Asahis.

Should you completely forget about blow outs?

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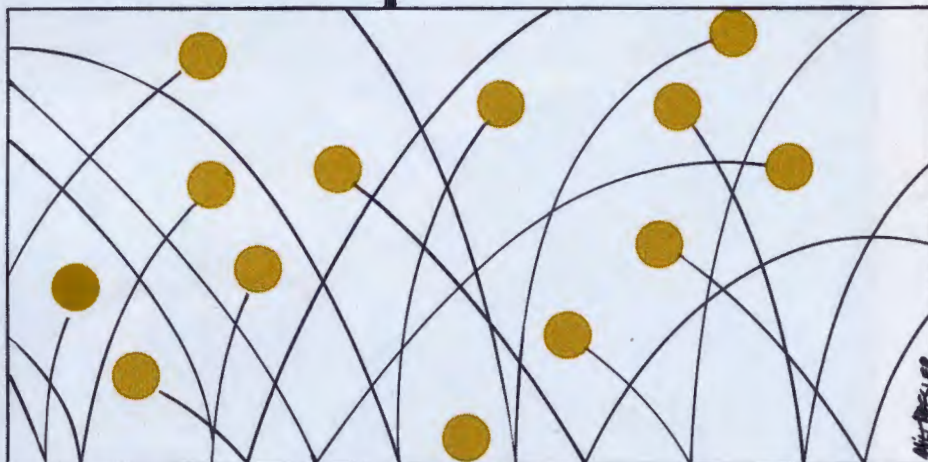
For Special Club Package & How to Promote Racquetball Lessons in Your Club, Write:

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Reader Survey

What You Told Us About Your Racquetballs



Funny how the little things in life — and racquetball — make things easier.

For instance, racquetballs. Who would think that a survey about round, blue, bouncing balls would create so much response! But that's exactly what happened when we ran our "Tell Us About Your Racquetballs" survey in the September, 1984 issue. Over 100 readers took the time to tell us what they like and dislike about the racquetballs that are presently on the market.

Our readers, 82% of whom play three or more times per week, and with 96% falling in the intermediate-advanced level, like the balls they're using. That doesn't mean that they don't have a few suggestions, but overall they like what's available.

"Penn racquetballs overall quality is unsurpassed in the industry," wrote Greg Scott, Lancaster, PA. Of our survey respondents, an incredible 82% said that they used Penn balls, making Penn, obviously, the dominant ball on the market.

"I've tried them all and Wilson is the only brand where I can count on two good, long-lasting, lively racquetballs in each can," said another reader.

Seventy-seven per cent of our readers had stayed with the balls they're now using for over a year. They listed such things as overall performance, durability, liveliness, and consistency of bounce as good to excellent for the balls they used (see chart).

The complaints came in on the inconsistency of balls from can to can, on the color, breakage, and how balls vary from manufacturer to manufacturer.

"Make them consistent!" challenged reader Ted Thee, Vista, CA.

"Some balls last for five minutes while others last for five matches!" echoed John Dobrota, Alberta, Canada.

"Make them livelier and faster," suggested Tim Berg, Morganville, NY. His suggestion made sense: *Racquetball cans should be dated so you know if they've been on the shelf for a long time.*

This suggestion was echoed by several of our readers who found that some of the balls they bought were livelier than others, even though it was the same brand they were using. These readers obviously suspect that some balls lay around, unused, in a tin can, on the shelf at the local sporting goods store (where 34% of our readers purchase their balls). Thirty-nine percent purchase balls at a discount store and 26% at the club's pro shop.

And while you can't please all the people all the time, all the people wish that their balls wouldn't break.

"My ball tended to break a lot and play very, very fast," wrote in Karen Donofrio, Suwanee, GA., "so I switched."

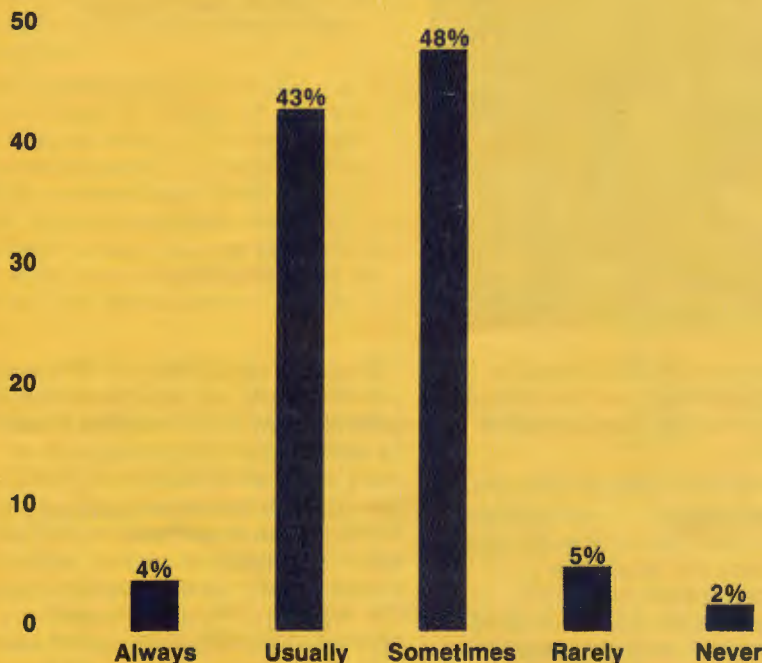
"Some break too quickly," wrote in John Osborne, Mesa, AZ, and the name on the ball disappears too quickly."

How would you rate your ball's performance in the following categories:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Overall	0	2%	41%	60%
Durability	1%	20%	50%	30%
Liveliness	0	8%	46%	47%
Consistency of Bounce	0	8%	46%	47%

How often do you use a new ball when you play?

Percent



Ronald Paogini, Nashville, TN, wrote, "They break too often. But I suppose they all do."

Yes, Ron, you're right. There wasn't one manufacturer who didn't receive a complaint about their balls breaking.

As to how many balls a player purchases a year, the results were high. Over 78% of our respondents purchase from five-10 cans of balls a year. One reader wrote, "Try over 100 cans a year!" Obviously, he plays a lot of racquetball.

And while "all balls should play equally" as reader Steve Martin, Illinois suggested, it's obvious to us that they don't.

Color was a big factor to some people. Several readers suggested that changing the color of the ball might improve the game or aid in visibility.

No matter what the cost, the breakage factor, or whatever, players have definite ideas about their racquetballs! ●

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NEW Impact One XP or XC	\$42.95
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Graphite Open T240/T250	\$54.95
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Gauze Grip, 10 yds. x 1 1/2"	1.50

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AARA Adopts New ARHS Ranking System



Pat McGlone, President of ARHS and Luke St. Onge, Executive Director of AARA finalizing the agreement between their two organizations. Also representing ARHS at the signing were (from left to right) Gordon Theis, a member of the Board; Becky Ausink, Operations; Chad Vogt, Marketing; Todd Gordenier, Operations and Paul Peterson, Board Chairman.

Because national player rankings have always been an important part of every amateur sport, the board of directors of AARA is pleased to announce that an agreement has been reached between AARA and The American Racquetball Handicap System (ARHS) making ARHS the official ranking service of AARA, responsible for managing and executing the AARA national player ranking program. With this agreement, AARA feels that amateur racquetball will have a more credible and timely player ranking system.

ARHS is a service of Standard Competitive Rating Systems, Inc. a Minnesota company which specializes in the development and marketing of player ranking and performance rating systems for competitive sports.

Since the introduction of its "in-club" program for rating racquetball players in 1983, clubs throughout the country have been signing up for this ARHS service because it addresses some very specific needs in the sport such as: developing leagues and other competitive events that

are more evenly matched, elimination of sandbagging, providing an easy method for players to arrange new, compatible matches, etc.

The ARHS "in-club" program primarily rates the performance of players through the use of actual game scores processed through a computer resulting in a numeric rating. These player performance ratings then replace the old, self-declared "A, B, C, Novice" method of establishing leagues, tournament divisions, challenge courts, etc. As a by-product of player performance ratings there is an accurate way to handicap games.

With the ARHS "in-club" player performance rating system, every racquetball match can potentially have two winners: (1) the person who won the game by the actual score, and, (2) if the other player beat the expected point spread (game handicap) his or her performance rating will go up, therefore, they also have received a positive reward for participating.

The ranking service that ARHS will be providing AARA will incorporate and expand on many of the concepts it uses in its own "in-club" program as well as many elements of the current AARA system. Through this exclusive agreement, ARHS will put its professional staff and computer capacity to work for AARA to provide a national player ranking system that will be significant to competitive amateur racquetball in the United States.

After Pat McGlone, President of ARHS and Luke St. Onge, Executive Director of AARA worked out the details of this program, they both agreed that through this joint venture, the ranking of amateur racquetball will be vastly improved. They also commented that this highly professional program needs the cooperation of the regional and state tournament directors in order to achieve its full potential.

"This means the regular and timely reporting of tournament results to AARA by tournament directors and state directors" said St. Onge, "and we want to have players from all 50 states represented on this ranking program this season and we need the grass roots support and cooperation to accomplish this."

A Look at the New System

In the national, regional and state ranking reports, as in the past, all sanctioned tournaments will be broken down into six levels:

- 1—*In House Club Tournaments*
- 2—*Closed Tournaments:* limited to only players in that state.
- 3—*Open Tournaments:* higher caliber competition than level 2 and open to players from other states.
- 4—*Open AARA State Tournaments:* open to players from other states and playing a higher caliber of competition than level 3.
- 5—*Regional and AARA Designated Events:* AARA regional championships and major national invitational tournaments.
- 6—*Nationals:* National Singles, Juniors, Doubles plus Intercollegiate championship.

Tournament points will be earned by divisions according to *Chart 1*.

"In order for the system to work, tournament results must be sent in," said

McGlone, "and to make that process easier, a new tournament report form has been developed."

A quantity of the new Tournament Division Results Report Form will be sent out to each sanctioned tournament by AARA. One form needs to be filled out for each division of the tournament. Full instructions on how to fill out the new report form will accompany each supply of forms sent out.

The Tournament Results Report Forms should be turned in promptly after the completion of each sanctioned tournament. All results received by AARA by the first of the month will be included in that month's report.

National, Regional and State reports broken down by playing divisions will be processed monthly by ARHS. For a player's name to show up in a division he or she must have finished in the third round or better (quarter-finals), in a sanctioned tournament, the results of which were turned into AARA.

As in the past, the reports will list the player's name, ranking, state and region (see *Chart 2*).

Although many states have their own ranking systems for seeding tournaments, with the additional information that the new AARA national ranking system will be reporting on each player, states will be able to use this additional data to aide them in their evaluation of players and their seeding efforts.

"We are not trying to replace the systems that the states are currently using to seed players on a week to week, tournament to tournament basis," McGlone said, "but we do encourage states to use the data we will be providing and possibly pattern their systems after ours to create more compatibility within the sport."

Some states have already indicated that they plan to adopt this new program for the purpose of seeding players in their tournaments.

"In any amateur sport, it is always considered a matter of prestige for both the player and the state to have their performance recognized by the national governing body. We encourage states to report to their general membership information about state players that have been recognized at the state, regional or national levels in our new ranking report," said St. Onge.

St. Onge also mentioned that "AARA will be using these rankings for the seeding of regional and national tournaments as well as in the selection process for participation in the AARA elite training camps."

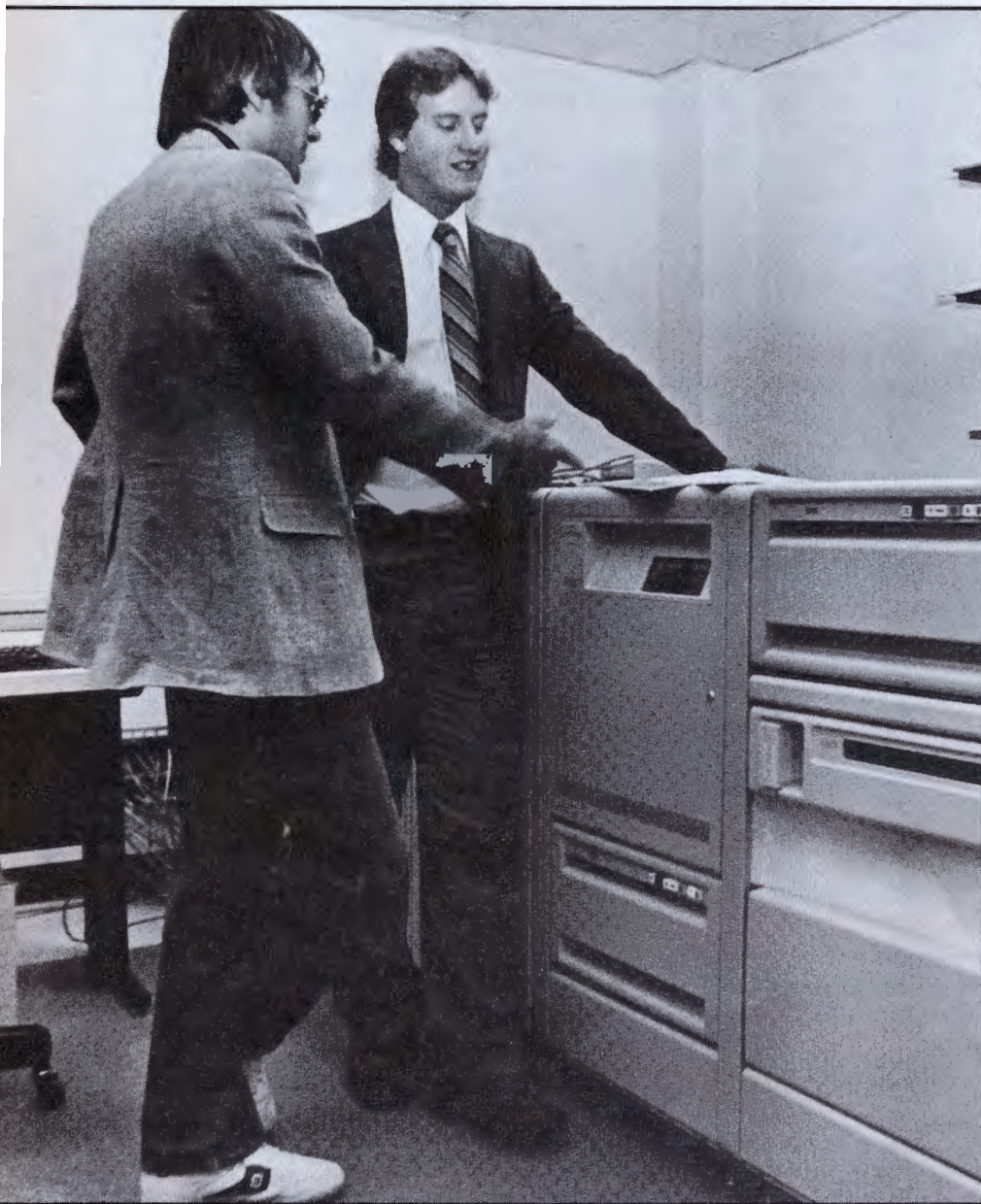
"We are impressed by the development that ARHS has put into this new program and therefore want to encourage all regional, state and local tournament directors to develop the habit of submitting tournament results to AARA after each sanctioned event which will help make this program highly meaningful to all of amateur racquetball," St. Onge said.

In addition to the ranking of players based on their win/loss records, ARHS will be doing a pilot project with two state associations to test its "in-club" rating system that uses actual game scores. This will be the first test of its kind using the state association environment. If these tests prove successful, it could eventually lead to a standard system that all states could use that would be completely integrated with the national program.

Tournament Levels	Winner	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th-8th Place Quarter Finalists	9th-10th Place
1	10 pts.	5 pts.	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.	None
2	20 pts.	10 pts.	8 pts.	5 pts.	3 pts.	None
3	50 pts.	30 pts.	20 pts.	15 pts.	10 pts.	None
4	100 pts.	60 pts.	45 pts.	30 pts.	20 pts.	None
5	175 pts.	100 pts.	70 pts.	40 pts.	35 pts.	None
6	500 pts.	200 pts.	100 pts.	75 pts.	50 pts.	25 pts.

AARA/ARHS NATIONAL RANKING 27-Sep-84																
DIVISION - (1)MEN'S OPEN																
Rank	Name	St	Reg	12 Mth Current & Last				Number of Tournaments Reached	Number of Tournaments Reached	Tournament Levels						Other Divisions Earned Qtr/Finals
				Cumltve Point Total	Seasons Point Total	Point Total	Gold Points			1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	NICHOLS, CHARLIE	FL	4	190	190	130	405	4	4	1	2	1				
2	HANSEN, TIM	FL	4	135	135	993	777	4	4	1	2	1				
3	BONZALEZ, SERGIO	FL	4	130	130	685	804	4	4	1	2	1				
4	SMITH, PICK	ME	1	100	100		150	2	2				2			
5	CAMPBELL, MITCH	FL	4	65	65	185	168	3	3	1	2					
6	GONZALEZ, OSCAR	FL	4	60	60	10	110	2	1		2					2,14,16
7	GAUTIER, BUBBA	FL	4	58	58	293	256	3	3	1	1	1				
8	DALES, JEFF	FL	4	50	50	130	160	1	1							
9	BENTSON, LEE	NC	4	50	50	70	115	1	1							
10	CASCIO, JIM	PA	3	50	50	470	579	1	1							
11	FERRIN, RICK	CA	14	50	50	17	54	1	1							
12	FERRIS, DAN	MN	11	50		250	350	1	1							
13	RAY, MIKE	GA	4	50	50	280	380	1	1							
14	SHAIN, CLIFF	MA	1	50	50	350	600	1	1							
15	TRAIL, JEROME	CO	16	50	50	50	150	1	1							
16	DEGBAN, RON	ME	1	40				2	2				2			3
17	ROSE, STEVE	FL	4						2		1	1				
18	SMITH, CHRIS	FL								1		1				17
19	SMITH, SCOTT												2			16
20	KLUSKA, MARK															17
21	MULL, RICHARD															

Luke St. Onge, Executive Director of AARA (on the left) and Todd Gordenier, Operations Manager for ARHS discussing the new ranking report in front of A.R.H.S.'s Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) VAX 750 Computer.



The column entitled "12 Month Cumulative Point Total" is the tournament point total that the players ranking is based on. This point total is a running 12 month total which means that when we process each month we add the points earned for the current month and subtract the points earned for the same month 12 months previous. This cumulative point approach recognizes both a player's previous and present accomplishments therefore revealing a better picture of their overall performance level.

"Current Season's Point Total" reports only the points earned, year to date, for the current season (June through May).

"Last Season's Point Total" is the total points earned the previous season. This column will provide an interesting, ongoing comparison with the year to date Current Season Total.

"Gold Points" are special and separate points that can only be earned in the Open, Senior (30+, 35+, 40+), Masters (45+, 50+) and Gold Masters (55+, 60+, 65+, 70+) divisions. Gold Points are accumulated on an ongoing basis, season after season. Once players achieve 2100 Gold Points they are awarded a certificate declaring that they are now a Grand Masters National Champion.

"Number of Tournaments Reached Qtr/Finals" Reported by player and by division, this column gives you the number of tournaments in the 12 month cumulative period the player has reached the quarter-finals.

"Number of Tournaments Reached Finals" Again, reporting by player and by division, this column shows the number of tournaments the player has achieved the level of finalist (or final two) during the 12 month cumulative period.

"Tournament Levels" For the past 12 month cumulative period, by player, by division, this column reports the levels of the tournaments in which the player reached the quarter-finals.

"Other Divisions Earned Qtr/Finals" Each division has a number code. This column will indicate other divisions the player has earned tournament points during the 12 month cumulative period. In other words if we are reporting Men's A and a particular player has also reached quarter-finals in the 25+ division, that will be coded in this last column.

Each month, ARHS will be updating player data and producing a complete report for each state, region and national broken down by divisions.

On the first page of the report is a listing of the tournaments ARHS has entered to date for the 12 month cumulative period. This listing provides the name, level and date of each of these tournaments.

Also available to each state and regional director will be a breakdown by tournament and division of the names of all finalists.

"We feel that the ranking of amateur racquetball players in this country has made a significant move forward as a result of this agreement between AARA and ARHS" said St. Onge. "The standardization of a total ranking system to encompass the entire sport of racquetball is now in full swing," said McGlone, "and support and cooperation is necessary for the expected expansion of the sport in years to come." ●

Reader Survey

NR's Annual Eyeguard Survey

Each year that *National Racquetball* runs this survey our responses double from the previous year. No other issue causes more controversy than that of eye protection.

Although it's important to present a guide which lists different manufacturers and their products, it's equally important to hear what you, the player, have to say about eyeguards.

Please, take a moment and fill out our questionnaire. If necessary, send us a letter on your experience with—or without—eyeguards. We will tabulate this information and present our findings to you in the *February, 1985* issue.

In order to ensure that your response reaches us on time, we need them by January 1, 1985. Send your completed form to *National Racquetball Magazine* Reader Survey, 4350 DiPaolo Center/ Dearlove Road, Glenview, IL 60025.

1. How often do you play racquetball?
3 or more times per week ☐
2 times per week ☐
1 time per week ☐
2 times per month ☐
1 time per month or less ☐
2. How many years have you been playing?
More than five ☐
5 or less ☐
4 or less ☐
3 or less ☐
2 or less ☐
1 or less ☐
3. Where do you normally play?
Commercial Club ☐
YMCA ☐
JCC ☐
Park District ☐
School ☐
Military Base ☐
Other ☐
4. What is your skill level?
Beginner ☐
Intermediate ☐
Advanced ☐
Open ☐
Professional ☐
5. Are you Male or Female?
Male ☐
Female ☐

6. What is your age?
Under 18 ☐
18-24 ☐
25-34 ☐
35-44 ☐
45-54 ☐
55 or over ☐
7. Do you wear eyeguards?
Yes ☐
No ☐
8. If you answered "Yes" to Question 7, how often do you wear eyeguards?
Rarely ☐
Occasionally ☐
Usually ☐
Always ☐
9. Do you wear corrective lenses (contacts or glasses) off the court?
Yes ☐
No ☐
10. If you wear eyeguards, do they have corrective prescription lenses?
Yes ☐
No ☐
11. Are the eyeguards you wear Open or Closed lenses?
Open ☐
Closed ☐
12. How often do you estimate your opponent wears eyeguards?
Never ☐
Rarely ☐
Occasionally ☐
Usually ☐
Always ☐
13. Have you ever been hit in the eye or face by a racquet or ball?
Yes ☐
No ☐
14. Have you ever been saved from a serious injury because you were wearing eyeguards?
Yes ☐
No ☐
15. Do you think eyeguards should be mandatory equipment for racquetball?
Yes ☐
No ☐
16. Do you think that eyeguards should be mandatory equipment for tournament play?
Yes ☐
No ☐
17. Are eyeguards mandatory for anyone at your club?
Yes ☐
No ☐
Who for? ☐

18. How many pairs of eyeguards do you own?
None ☐
1 ☐
2 ☐
3 or more ☐
19. Where did you purchase your last pair of eyeguards?
Local club pro shop ☐
YMCA/JCC ☐
Sporting Goods Store ☐
20. How many pair of eyeguards did you purchase in the last 12 months?
None ☐
1 ☐
2 ☐
3 or more ☐
21. What was the cost of the last pair eyeguards you purchased?
\$5 or less ☐
\$10 or less ☐
\$15 or less ☐
\$20 or less ☐
\$25 or less ☐
\$26 or more ☐
22. What will influence your next eyeguard buying decision? (Rank in order of your first three preferences; i.e., put a number 1 next to your first choice, number 2 next to your second choice. etc.)
Comfort ☐
Frame construction materials ☐
Open vs. closed lens ☐
Appearance ☐
Local instructor's advice ☐
Advertising ☐
Price ☐
Safety features ☐
Other ☐
23. Do you believe that the eyeguards you are presently wearing give you maximum protection?
Yes ☐
No ☐
24. What is the name of the manufacturer who makes the eyeguards you now wear?
☐
25. Did you research any information concerning eyeguards prior to buying a pair?
Yes ☐
No ☐

(Optional)

Name
Address
City
State/Zip

Charlie Garfinkel's 'Spot' Racquetball

New 5 Foot Rule Bodes Well For Lobs

by Charlie Garfinkel

This article continues a monthly series by former top pro Charlie Garfinkel using the "spot" theory of racquetball, which helps improve your game by hitting a specific spot on the wall, which will give the desired effect for the shot. The spot theory also takes into consideration the "spots" on the court occupied by both you and your opponent.



This past May the American Amateur Racquetball Association (AARA) made an excellent rule change, one that will help players at all levels. The rule pertains to the serve and the five foot line.

Previously, the receiver could cross over the five foot line once the ball had passed the short line. It didn't matter whether the ball had already bounced or was still in the air, when the receiver struck it.

The new rule states that the receiver can't cross the five foot line if the ball hasn't first bounced between the short line and the five foot line. That is, the receiver must wait behind the five foot line until the ball has passed that line, before striking it.

Even the plane of the racquet can't follow through in the area between the short and five foot line, after the ball is struck in the air. Naturally, the receiver can enter the area between the short and five foot line if the ball bounces in that area.

From a safety standpoint I feel that the new rule is especially good. Under the old rule, many players including myself, were guilty of too quickly moving out of the service box after serving. While we were doing that, the receiver would be moving into the same area to return the ball.

Needless to say, many collisions and near collisions occurred, sometimes resulting in injury to the server or receiver, or both. The server was always in jeopardy of being hit by the receiver's racquet, the ball, or their receiver's body.

Another tremendous result of the new rule is the virtual elimination of the bickering over the receiver crossing the five foot line too quickly. That is, did the ball cross the short line before the receiver moved across the five foot line, or didn't it?

As for tournaments, referees will especially enjoy the new rule, as they will be easily be able to see the receiver moving or swinging his racquet too early into the five foot zone.

However, there is also a word of caution for the server. Another AARA rule states that the server automatically loses his serve if he steps over the short line before the ball passes the short line.

These new rules will greatly help players who have difficulty hitting an effective drive serve. They will be able to concentrate on lob serves which will be more effective than ever since the receiver will be unable to rush them. Thus, the receiver will consistently be pinned in deep back court. Even if you're a beginner or intermediate, you'll be pleasantly surprised at the excellent serves you'll be able to hit with moderate practice.

Advanced players will also be able to make good use of lob serves, to complement their drives. Against certain opponents they'll find the lob can be used for a first serve instead of the traditional second serve. The wear and tear that is saved on the arm by using the lob serve, will become even more noticeable.

Because the lob serve will soon be used more than ever, "Spot Racquetball" can be very effective. I will show you how to use a wide variety of lobs that will greatly improve your game if you're willing to experiment. And you must not be afraid to occasionally to serve your opponent's forehand.

The first serve to hit is the medium (half) lob, once described as the "garbage serve." It is extremely effective because it is hit so tantalizingly slow, the anxious receiver often tries to short hop or shoot the ball, resulting in many foolish errors.

Many returns of half lobs will ricochet off the back wall, fall short on the ceiling, or will sit up in the front court. This will enable you to have a field day, putting away shot after shot.

To hit the medium lob serve to the backhand, stand in the middle of the service box. The ball should hit the front wall about one foot to the left of center, about eight or nine feet high from the floor. The ball will then carry past the five foot line, and bounce close to the left side wall (Diagram 1.)

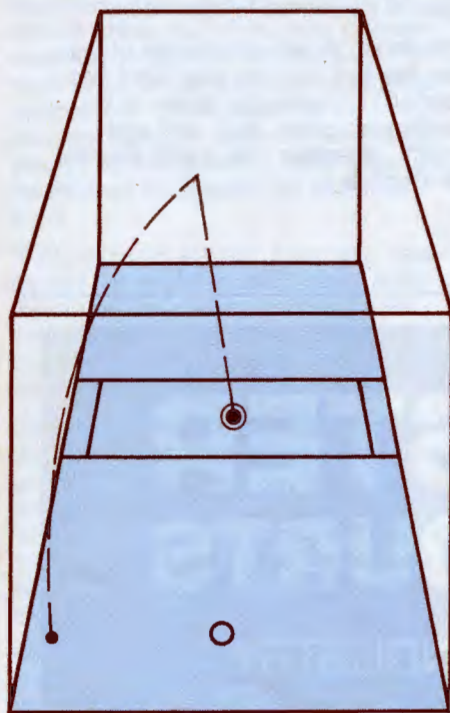


Diagram 1. Medium lob serve to the backhand.

Because there is no pace on the serve it is difficult for the receiver to hit an extremely hard, low return. However, be careful that the ball doesn't strike the side wall — will slow down and allow your opponent an easy setup.

Occasionally, the serve should also be hit to the right (forehand) side. Even though this serve is (presumably) to your opponent's strength, (unless you're playing a lefty) you must hit these to keep the receiver from preparing and leaning consistently to his backhand side.

You'll also be pleasantly surprised to notice that the righthander may encounter some difficulty handling this serve since he has become acclimated to returning

serve mostly with his backhand. In addition, you may aggravate him by seeming to imply, "Hey, I'm serving to your strength. Shoot the ball if you can!"

Another lob serve that is especially effective against most players, especially those 5'8" and under (under) is the high lob serve that creases the side wall. The new AARA rule plays an important role with this serve, as the ball is hit so high and close to the side walls that it is virtually impossible to take out of the air. After the ball catches the side wall, it is often very difficult to make an effective return, as the ball practically dies in the corners.

To hit the high lob serve to the left side of the court, stand in the middle of the service box. The ball should hit one to two feet to the left of center on the front wall, six to eight feet down from the ceiling. The ball will then carry to the deep left side wall and bounce in the back left corner (Diagram 2.)

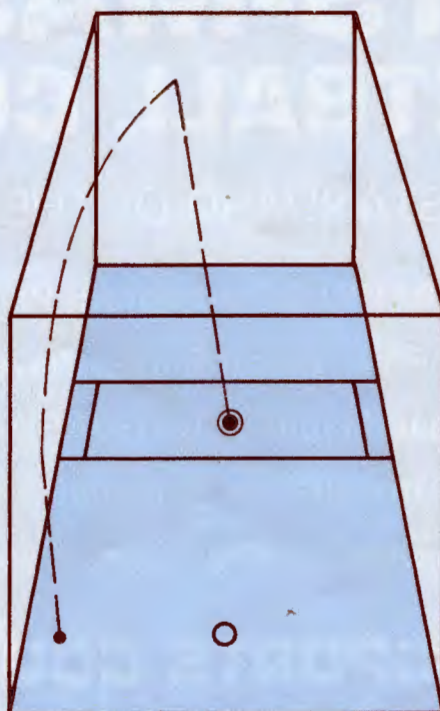


Diagram 2. High lob serve to the left.

Two other lob serves that aren't used as much as they should be, are the high lobs straight down the right and left side walls. I guarantee that you'll drive your opponents crazy if you master these. The reason these lobs are so effective is that most players are used to returning a serve that comes to them at a much wider angle. Because the trajectory of the ball is straight after striking the front wall, there is very little room between side wall and ball for the receiver to return the serve.

These serves are especially effective in doubles, giving you complete control of the right (or left) side of the court, forcing your opponent to go cross court continuously. Your partner should be stationed on the other side of the court ready to put the ball away.

To hit the lob serve straight down the right side wall (Diagram 3) stand about five feet away from that wall. The ball should hit about four feet from the right side

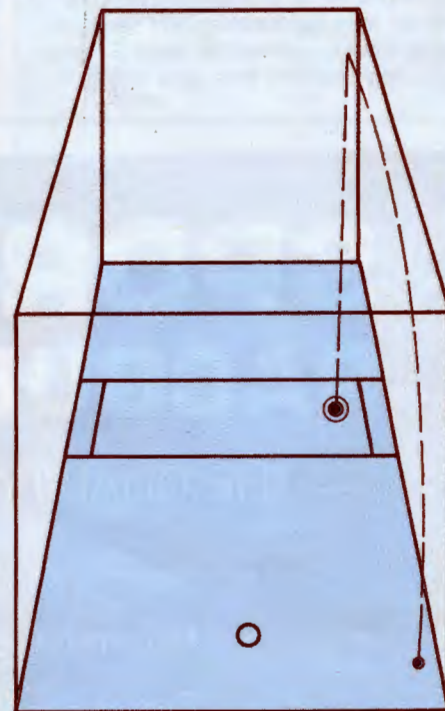


Diagram 3. Lob serve down the right wall.

wall, about six to eight feet down from the ceiling on the front wall. The ball will then carry over the five foot line into deep back court, barely missing the right side wall. Your bewildered opponent will find himself scraping his racquet against wall to return.

Hitting the high lob straight down the line on the left side of the court is similar, except for one major change. To develop a really superb serve down the left, you

should emulate all time great, Steve Keeley, who used this serve often.

But, Keeley always hit it with his backhand. "Has the illustrious Gar gone completely bonkers? How can I hit a shot like that when I have a weak backhand to start with?" Actually, you're partially correct. I didn't say that it would be easy to hit this serve. However, with practice, you'll be pleasantly surprised with the results.

Note: As you become more proficient with this serve on both sides of the court, try moving closer to the side wall when you begin.

Another lob serve that is especially dependable is one that Jerry Hilecher hits. Hilecher, who possesses one of the greatest hard drives serves that I have ever seen, is also one the game's smartest players. On his first serve Hilecher is constantly stepping and moving across the service area, beautifully disguising his awesome drive. That's what makes his lob second serve so mesmerizing. The contrast from his booming first serve, to a near-slow motion on his second serve, can totally blow the receiver's timing.

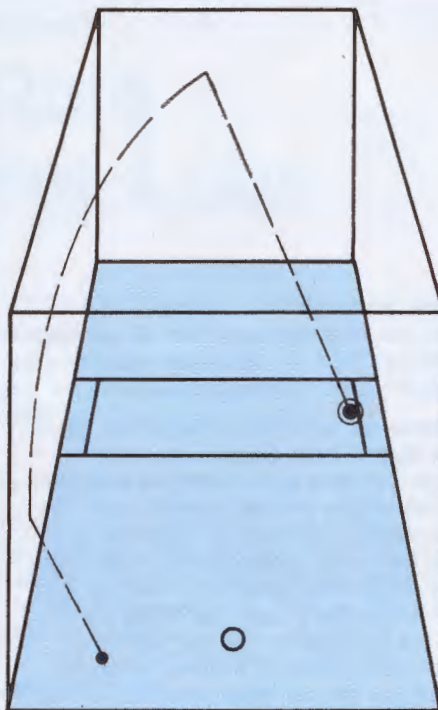


Diagram 4. "Slow motion" medium lob off drive serve motion.

To hit the serve as Hilecher does, stand two to three feet from the right side wall. The ball should then hit one foot from the left of center on the front wall, six to eight down from the ceiling. It will carry to the deep, left wall. Although the ensuing bounce will be three to four feet from the side wall (Diagram 4) due to the wide angle of the serve the receiver once again is stuck deep in back court.

Therefore, to take advantage of the new five foot line rule, use "Spot Racquetball" to make your variety of lob serves even better. And, until next month, remember: "Be a star! Play like the Gar!" ●

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'Real' Boxes Replace Tape

Improving The Practice Court

by Mark Kessinger

If you have ever come upon a court where the front wall was marked off in different areas with various colored tape, then you've seen a practice court. While fairly common in racquetball facilities, practice courts are usually the least accessible, most out-of-the-way and seldom used. Most players avoid the practice court like the plague—and for good reason.

The practice court is usually reserved for beginners, those who have little or no idea of where the ball is going or even supposed to go. After all, that's why the court has a whole bunch of target areas mapped out. There are boxes for hitting lobbs and half-lobbs, boxes for pinch shots, boxes for drive serves in either alley, and height lines for effective kill and drive shots.

Most advanced players, those who have passed the beginner and D level, avoid playing on the practice court because they find the lines and boxes a distraction. Essentially, the practice court has become the teaching court for beginners.

Oh, occasionally, the instructional pro will drag one of his more advanced students onto the practice court and make them use it, but the reality is—the practice court has become the least used court in the club—which is too bad because we all need practice. We just don't need those silly lines on the walls.

What the better players feel about the lines and boxes being distracting brings us to the truth about the practice court: it just isn't good racquetball technique. The distraction comes from having to pull your eyes away from where they should be—to grab a look at the front wall lines and boxes.

It is like training a baseball player to hit the ball while looking out into left field. We all remember being yelled at when we were young by well meaning adults: "Watch the ball!"

The same is true for racquetball.

The day I went into my own practice court and began ripping the lines of tape off the wall, I got quite a few stares. Some people wondered if I was giving up teaching. Quite the contrary, I was getting back to good teaching.

I had not put the lines up on the wall in the first place and I was never comfortable with the idea. I had learned to hit my serves by watching the ball and then checking the angle of the ball as it passed by me, *after* it hit the wall. I don't think I was ever very intent on seeing where it hit on the front wall. After all, my target was in the *back court*, where my opponent was.

One of the biggest victims of the practice court's lines & boxes are the juniors. I have watch clinics ad infinitum in which the kids stood in the service zone and tried to hit the ball while watching the front wall. No, they weren't actually taught this way—it was just a natural tendency for these youngsters to sneak a peek at their intended target.

For the older players who took adult clinics, at first they used the boxes as they should: to give them a general idea of where to hit the front wall in order to accomplish a certain serve or shot. After that, they began to concentrate on the swing and ball contact. But, as soon as they were sure that the ball contact was going to take place the way they wanted, they shifted their eyes and attention to the front wall target again.

This caused a lifting of their head during the stroke which changed the direction of the swing. Then they were surprised when they didn't execute the shot they had spent so much time planning and practicing. And it became difficult for them to correct their mistake, not knowing where it took place.

When teaching how to hit a certain shot, I use reference points that are in relation to the body. This allows students to get a feel of the court space without having to look around at the court while they swing. It also allows them to concentrate on visual contact with the ball during the swing.

For a half-lob serve into the corner, for example, I suggest that students hit the ball into the front wall at an angle. To get the feel for this angle, the ball should be contacted waist high to hit the front wall about head high. This gives the proper angle of the half-lob without the distraction of lines and boxes.

For a full lobb, students would hit from a waist high position to the front wall about twice their height. Some students must find this angle by trial and error, but once they do, they have a feel for it that is natural and does not interfere with the mechanics of the swing (*Diagram 1*).

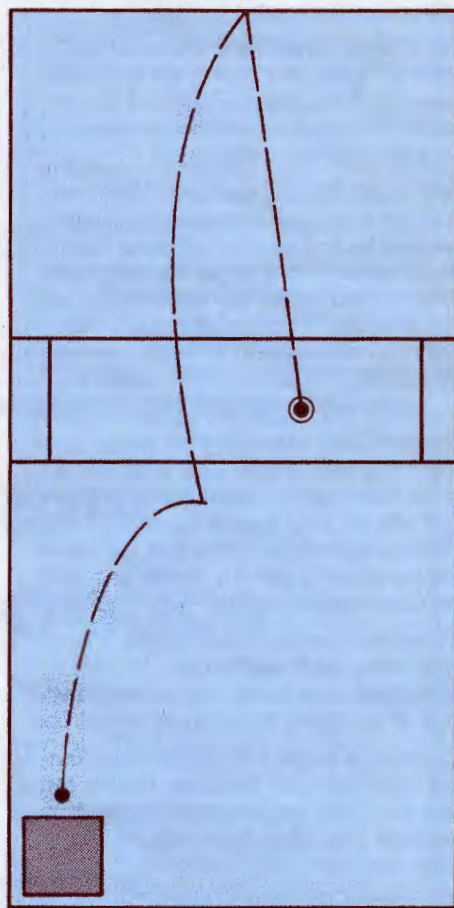


Diagram 1: Lob Drill: Placing the box in the corner gives the player a better feel for where his shot must end up, rather than trying to find the "right" spot on the front wall to aim at. Placing the ball into the box allows the player to practice the proper angles to get the ball into the corner. It also allows the player to develop a "feel" for the correct trajectory: speed and slope of the shot to achieve the proper "drop" into the box.

This "feel" will not desert them either, for as they move around the court, the angle remains the same as from the service zone. The lines and boxes, however, are only accurate when the player is in one position.

To be fair and honest, I did not strip the front wall of *all* the lines and boxes. I left the high and half lobs boxes because they were hard to reach and less detrimental to the swing. To make a high lob, the player may face more towards the front wall than the side, and if he raises his head up during the swing, it will accept the angle.

For a drive serve, lifting the head will raise the shot, and facing the front wall more than the side wall will pull the shot wide, sending it across the back court instead of into the corner.

Any player, at any level, will have better success if he can determine the angle needed for the shot by a feel for the court rather than a target the front wall. This method allows the student to grasp the idea that his target is actually back in the court somewhere, in relation to his opponent.

I also left the height line for kill shots on my front wall, although it no longer goes from side wall to side wall. It is only a short hash mark in each corner. The six foot line for beginners is gone because it was the same line as the first course of panels which is already visible and part of many modern courts.

To replace the front wall targets, I suggest using back wall targets. No, not more lines and boxes only at the other end of the court; try using an actual box.

To make a target box, go through your pro shop and look for a two foot by two foot box. Line the bottom with towels or a garbage bag pillow filled with articles from last year's lost and found.

To practice lob serves, place the box in the corner, upright. Now serve either half-lobs or lobs, depending on the steepness of the angle from where you hit the ball to the front wall, and try to hit the target. When a ball rebounds into the box, you've made your target. Don't be too critical at first and give yourself points for coming close.

For practicing drive serves and down-the-line pass shots, turn the box on its side so the open face is pointed towards the front wall. Slide the box into the corner with the bottom now against the back wall. From a serve position (or any other

position) drive low and fast into the corner. If the ball hits the inside of the box, the pillows on the bottom of the box will stop most of the shots. Bullseye!

Another technique for learning pass shots comes from placing the box in the court where your opponent would be (*Diagram 2*). The target now is the court behind

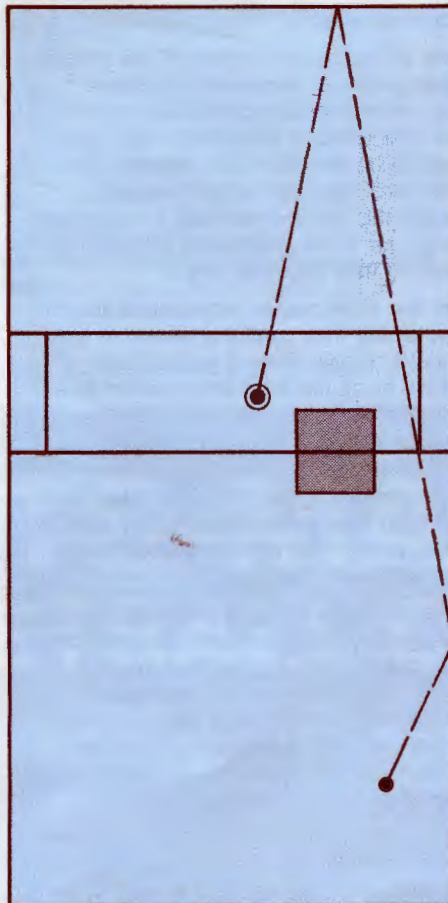


Diagram 2: Pass Drill: Shooting past the box allows you to set up play situations which lines and tape won't allow. The box serves as a surrogate opponent. To make a successful pass shot, you must angle the ball so it flies "past" your opponent at maximum speeds before hitting the wall and floor well behind your opponent. Hitting the floor and wall has a braking effect which ensures that your pass shot stays past your opponent and does not boomerang back into his reach. The use of the box has the added advantage of being three dimensional: easier to see and judge the distance to it from the corner of your eye so you don't have to take your eye off the ball and destroy your eye-hand coordination.

the box. Pass your shots so that they pass between the box and the side wall. That's the first goal.

Once you can do that consistently, make sure the shots don't rebound off the back wall towards the box again. They must hit the side-wall past the box and slow down for a second bounce, or be hit so

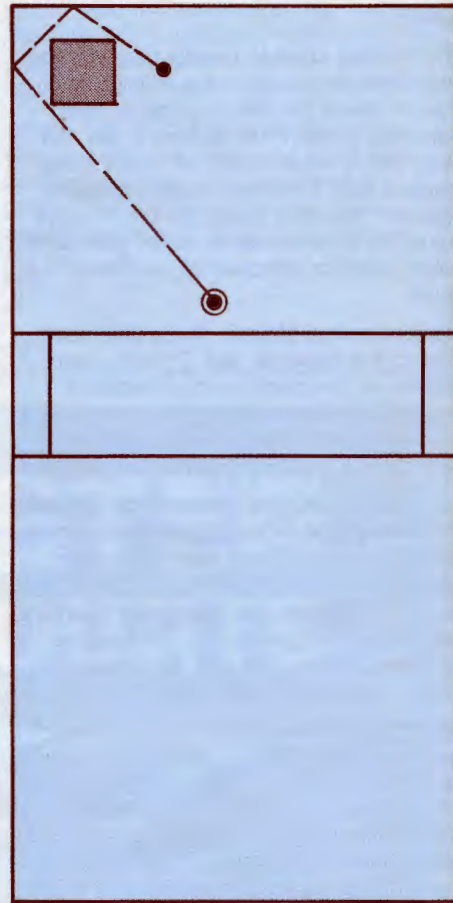


Diagram 3: Pinch Drill: Again the box is a three-dimensional or "solid" object in the court. Being able to see it better with the peripheral vision allows the player to concentrate on the shot, focus his eyes on the ball, while being aware of the target box at the same time. The effective pinch shot travels around the box for a successful placement. Shooting around the box allows the player to hit the right spots on both the side wall and the front wall from various positions and angles. With tape and wall targets, the player would be able to map out only one such combination at a time, or cover the walls and tapes with box and lines in a confusing jumble of targets. Using the box, the emphasis is based on a "feel" for the angles involved.

Mark Kessinger is the Head Racquetball Instructor at Chancellors Racquet Club, Houston, TX.

low that they bounce twice before reaching the back wall.

This drill can be practiced anywhere on the court and simulates actual court conditions more accurately than any line of tape on the front wall could do. It also offers more of a challenge to the advanced player and will not alter or interrupt the swing.

Finally, pinch shots can be practiced by placing the box in the corner of the front court (Diagram 3), about three feet or more from the walls. This distance will vary depending on your skill and the size of your box, and the kind of pinch shot you're looking for. The side wall pinch must pass beside the box, hit the wall, cross the corner to the front wall and rebound out. By shooting around the box, you develop a feel for the pinch shot.

The same shot changes when your court position changes but the target box remains. Some weight might be placed in the box so errors don't slide the box out of the way.

Using the box method of practicing will allow beginners to develop their feel for the game quickly. It will present a challenge for the advanced player. It is flexible enough so that anyone may use it to work on any set of specific shots. And it doesn't have to take one of those nice clean, white-walled courts and make them look like a dart board. Instead of having such a court for practice, each club could instead keep a nice little "instructional" box with towels in the back room. Yours for the asking. ●



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Steve Mondry's Racquetball Clinic

Getting The Most Out Of Watching A Match

by Steve Mondry



It is no secret that San Diego has long been the hotbed of racquetball. For the past 15 years, and especially during the initial years of pro racquetball (1973-78), the overall level of play in San Diego has been better than anywhere else. And while the reasons for this may be many, one important reason grew out of the abundance of top players.

Originally, top players relocated to San Diego to have the opportunity to compete with other top players on a daily basis. When Steve Keeley moved from Michigan; Steve Serot and Marty Hogan from St. Louis; Richard Wagner from New Jersey; and many others from all points east (including the author), they were all in search of each other.

San Diego boasted Charlie Brumfield, four time national champ, and his mentor Dr. Bud Muehleisen, along with a host of other, talented players. The more the top players congregated along the beaches, the more wanted to make the trip to "mecca."

It didn't hurt that racquetball's leading racquet manufacturers were both headquartered in San Diego during this time period, and were better to make a name for yourself (and maybe pick up a sponsor) than in the manufacturer's own backyard?

As a result, an eager player could walk into one of a half-dozen clubs, sit down in the gallery of the glass court, and probably catch two touring pros battling it out. As often as not, the match in progress would be repeated a few weeks hence in the quarter-finals, semi-finals and even finals of a professional tour stop.

What an opportunity for the eager learner! Yet, I wonder how many rising racquetball stars actually missed the boat by not knowing how to take full advantage of all this talent right under their noses. Unfortunately for too many of them, they didn't know how to properly watch a top racquetball match.

There are really two ways to watch a match, like any sporting event. You can watch to see who wins (or is winning), or you can watch to see *how* one player or team is winning. Those who got hung up on who won, lost. Those who concentrated on how somebody won, won.

I doubt that there will ever be such a time again as there was in San Diego when literally 12 of the top 16 players lived and competed there. But the lessons of properly watching a top match can still help you improve your game, whether watching matches on ESPN, pro tournaments, exhibitions, or just the best players your town or club has to offer.

The Right Spot

The most important factor is sitting in the proper place. Generally, there is but one proper place and that is behind the back wall. Only from that position can you get a true picture and feeling for what is going on inside the court. The most elaborate three and four-walled glass courts still have only one good viewing position—behind the back wall.

From here you can mentally put yourself on the court because your perspective is the same as the players. You can see the shots, the strokes, the court positioning and the strategy. Personally, I like to sit off to one side of the back wall or the other depending on what I'm particularly interested in.

For example, if I want to note a player's forehand set up and stroke, I'll sit toward his forehand side. Likewise, the backhand. Never sit exactly in the middle, because the receiver will block out your view of most serves.

Amazingly, the longer you sit behind the back wall, the more "into" the match your mind and body seem to get. Eventually, you find yourself squirming and twitching as if you're lunging to make the frantic "get," or you're trying to rip that drive serve.

Charting Shots

Charting shots has two purposes. For tournaments, it gives you an extremely vivid picture of what shots a particular player hits from various positions on the court. On the assumption that you're watching a future opponent, this information could prove invaluable. For everyday play, charting allows you to learn where good or excellent players take their important, rallying ending shots.

A pad of paper and pencil is all the equipment you need, along with an outline of a court. It's easy to set up your own symbols, making sure to denote kills, passes, skips, serves and errors, backhand, forehand or overhead. As you chart more and more top players, you'll notice patterns develop.



And while each player has his or her unique style, there will be more than enough solid, fundamental patterns to give you a ton of information on proper shot selection and strategy.

Your challenge, of course, is getting down on the court and translating what you've got on paper into points on the board. And the only way to do that is through practice.

Notice Serves

As they say, the only time a player is given center court position with his opponent mandatorily stuck in deep court, is during the serve. Therefore, it is important for any viewer of top racquetball matches to pay close attention to the serves.

Top players play to their strengths and to their opponent's weaknesses. Some players find a serve that works and pound away at it; others file a good one, hoping to bring it back later in the match at a critical point. Yet all players do certain things with their serves that you should be looking for.

The first serve, for example, is it a drive? Z? How often do top players change speeds? How many times during the game does a top player serve his opponent's forehand? What second serve is most often used?

You'll find the answers to these questions in almost every match. Charting serves, or just mentally noting them, will help you understand how the best players interpret the importance of serving. Obviously, if you're watching your next round opponent in the state championship, you should get a fairly accurate picture of his favorite and not-so-favorite serves, information that should be useful to you.

Footwork, Attitude, Errors

Once you get used to seriously watching a match, you'll be able to detect nuances in other phases of the game that have a great bearing on the outcome.

Footwork, certainly, is one of these areas. At first, the pros seem to be devoid of any footwork. As the ball blasts from corner to corner, it appears that all they can do is (maybe) track the ball down and somehow rip it back. However, the longer you watch, the more you'll notice their footwork.

Not only are top players always on their toes, always moving, but they have developed the uncanny ability to almost always get their body into proper position to hit the shot they want. This often takes some physical compromising, but you'll notice a relationship between feet, hips, arm and head that consistently lines up.

The important factor is not to notice that it happens, but how it happens. The majority of today's players use hustle, anticipation, experience and desire.

You'll notice that the better the player, the better the concentration. Oh, you'll occasionally get a screamer, but more often than not, the screamer is trying to get himself out of a lethargic mental frame, rather than trying to rattle his opponent. Generally speaking, you can see intensity in the eyes. Look for it and then duplicate it when you play.

Errors come in two types, forced and unforced. Forget about the forced errors because they happen to everyone. Dwell on the unforced errors for it is here that matches are won and lost.

It's easy to say that most top players don't make very many unforced errors and that's why they win. But when you get two top players together, there undoubtedly will be some unforced errors. The difference between the winner and the loser will often be determined by a players' reaction to unforced errors.

The player who loses his cool when he skips is likely to mis-hit a shot in the next rally. A player who keeps his cool, doesn't dwell on the error, will more than likely have a good subsequent rally.

I once knew a player who was actually better than me, but he was a real hot-head. When he missed that set-up, he'd go into a rage, yelling at himself, swearing and generally getting all worked up. When that would happen, I'd serve my next serve a soft, garbage (half-lob) to his forehand, about shoulder high. Invariably, he would skip it in and I'd get two points instead of one.

So learn by watching. You're sure to improve! ●

Pinpointing Ball Placement: The Zone Method For Beginners

by David C. Pizarro

There is no magic formula which will improve a beginning racquetball player's game overnight. Nearly all players agree that practice is a necessity, but the approach to practice sessions and drills is often clouded with poor personal habits and lack of specific goals.

Inattention to the results of strokes and non-systematic methods of learning angles often prevent rapid growth and development of the beginning player's game. Practice sessions need to be planned, systematic in nature and progressive, if they are to be an effective means of developing one's game.

Once the basic stroke techniques of the forehand and backhand have been mastered, the beginner should concentrate on ball placement and angles. The ability to place the ball accurately with consistency to the front wall is a more important objective than trying to overpower it.

Obtaining shot accuracy is difficult for the beginner. He often appears to be easily fooled by angles involved in hitting serves and passing shots. The player typically angles the ball to the front wall at a point too close to the side wall.

The ball, upon rebounding from the front wall, strikes the side wall in the front court area and caroms into center court where it can be easily played by the opponent. The inability to estimate angles and the lack of consistency in placement of the ball to the front wall appear to be two major obstacles to the improvement of the beginner's game.

Whether serving or hitting, a player needs to determine the angles and ball placement that will be most effective. For most beginners this is an arduous task of trial and error. For the more eager beginner, instructional booklets are often sought for answers on ball placement.

However, no instruction book can tell you exactly where to aim when you hit a serve or passing shot and few instructional courses offer a method for learning ball placement while systematically providing feedback in regards to error correction of angles. But the beginner doesn't have to go through a long trial and error method to develop an instinctive feel for the proper rebound angles.

The *Zone Method* may offer the beginner a short-cut to the successful learning of angles and ball placement for serves and passing shots.

The *Zone Method* is a spin-off from Steve Strandemo's use of hitting alleys. Strandemo, for textbook illustration, painted the numbers one through four on the front wall of a court. This was done to visually orient the reader to the alleys or areas where the ball should be hit to achieve the proper angle. This type of set up is not very feasible for daily drills and instructional classes.

Therefore, a modification of Strandemo's idea has been developed to help beginners calculate angles and achieve effective

ball placement. This method, the *Zone Method*, requires minimal equipment, is easily adapted to instructional classes and has been successfully used with both children (ages 8-18) and adults.

The *Zone Method* involves the development of five vertical zones on the front wall, either visually or imaginatively (*Diagram 1*). Those players unable to visualize the five zones are assisted by the placement of four cones/markers equidistant apart at the base of the wall (*Diagram 2*). The zones, which are approximately four feet in width, are numbered 1 through 5 from left to right on the wall. They provide the beginner with a point of aim and allow error correction to be easily and objectively interpreted.

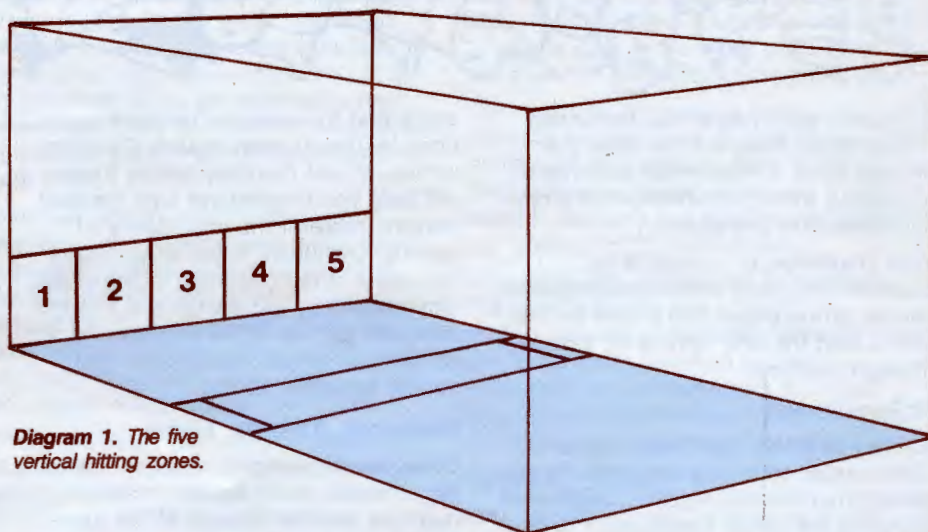


Diagram 1. The five vertical hitting zones.

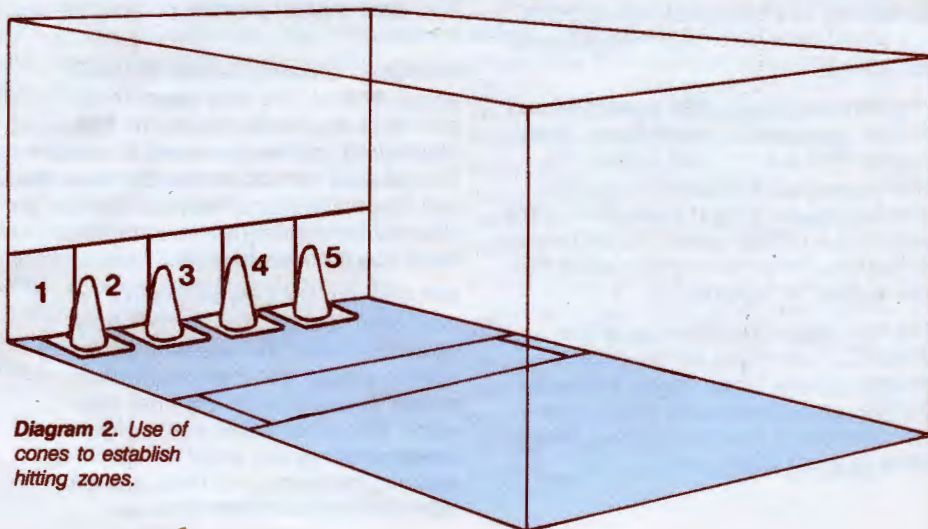


Diagram 2. Use of cones to establish hitting zones.

Serving

The *Zone Method* can help the beginner acquire an instinctive feel for angle and placement when learning to serve. To teach the low drive serve from the center court position, stand so that the point of ball contact will be at the center (*Diagram 3*) of the service zone (i.e., right-handers should stand slightly left of center in the service zone).

The instructor should indicate the points of aim for the low drive by standing behind the player and tossing a ball to zones 2 and 4. The player should observe the resulting rebound from the front wall and then attempt to duplicate ball placement and angle using his low drive serve.

The player should be given verbal feedback (knowledge of results) in relation to the zone in which the ball struck the wall (i.e., "The ball rebounded off the side wall because you hit it into zone 5"). With practice the player will soon be able provide his own feedback and make the angle adjustments necessary to achieve an effective low drive serve.

Low drive serves contacted from the right or left side of the service zone are taught in a manner similar to that discussed previously, except that the zones are different. The low drive serve from the right (*Diagram 4*) requires the player to place the ball in zone 3 (crosscourt) or on the line between zones 4 and 5 (down the wall). The low drive serve from the left side (*Diagram 5*) requires the player to place the ball into zone 3 (crosscourt) or on the line between zones 1 and 2 (down the wall).

The Z serve can also be taught using the Zone Method. Zones 1 and 5 are the points of aim when learning this serve (*Diagram 6*). Like the low drive serve, the height of ball placement in a zone will depend upon the player's strength and the liveliness of the ball.

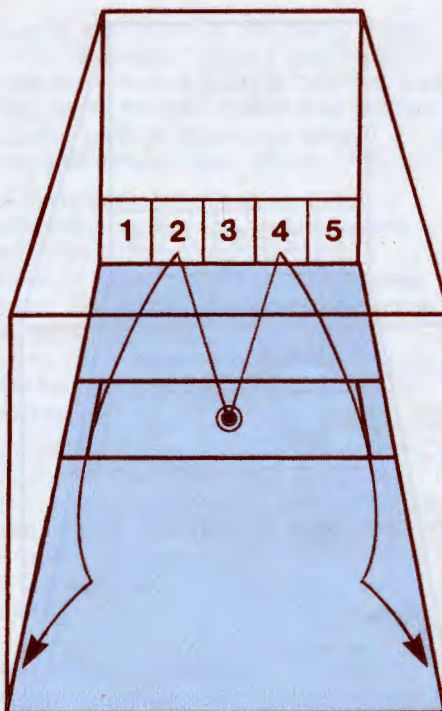


Diagram 3. "Points of aim" for low drive serve from center of service zone.

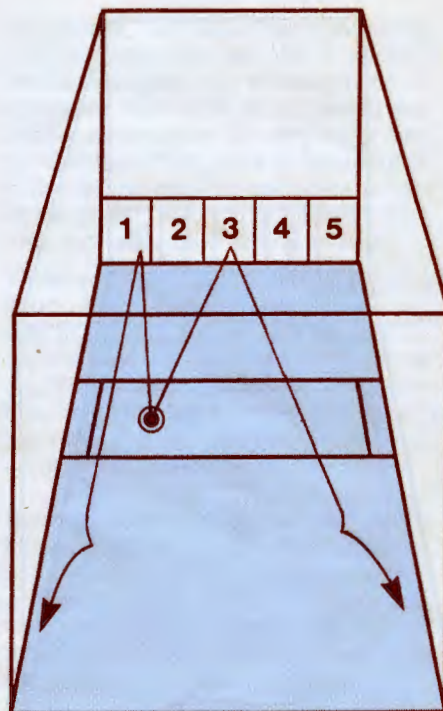


Diagram 5. Low drive serve from left side of service zone.

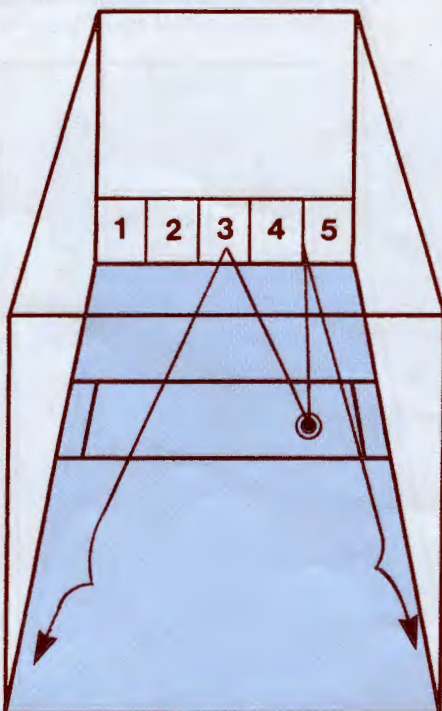


Diagram 4. The low drive serve from right side of service zone.

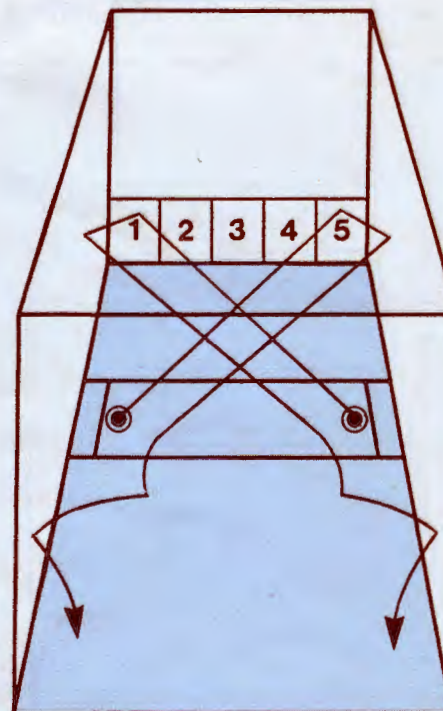


Diagram 6. The Z serve using the Zone Method.

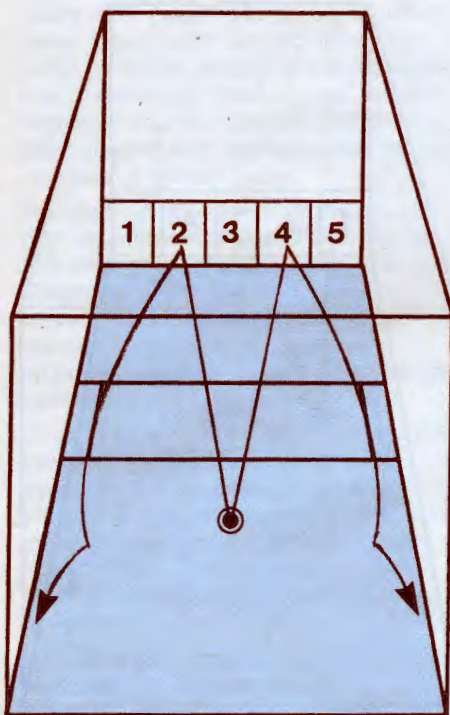


Diagram 7. The passing lanes.

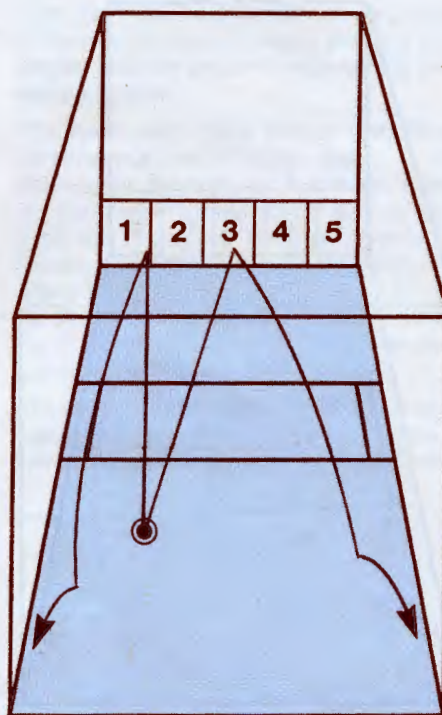


Diagram 9. Passing lanes from left side of court.

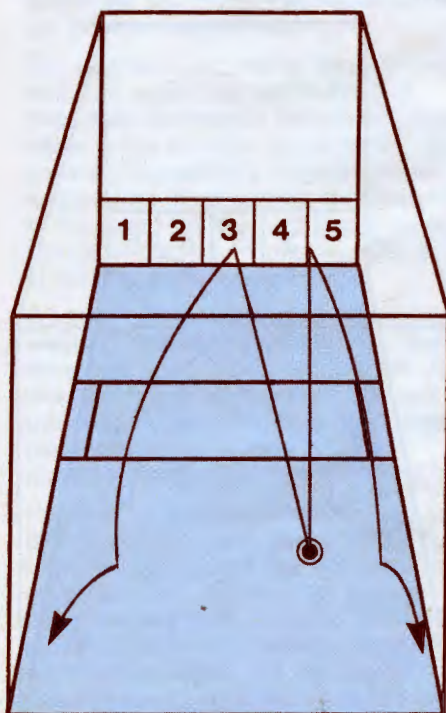


Diagram 8. Passing lanes from right side of court.

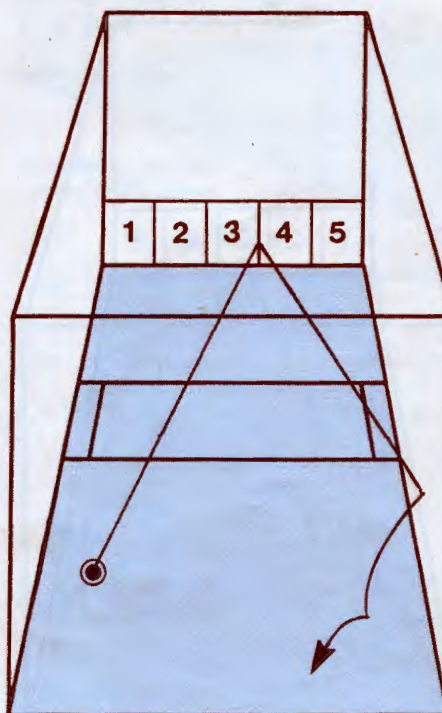


Diagram 10. Crosscourt pass using side wall (v-pass).

Passing Shots

Trial and error learning can also be reduced when the *Zone Method* is employed to teach passing shots. Angles and ball placement suggested previously for learning the low drive serve can be utilized to teach both the crosscourt pass and down-the-line pass. The one major difference is that you are now striking the ball from the back court area.

Your goal is to drive the ball to the back corners from various positions in the back court. From deep center court drive the ball into zones 2 and 4 (Diagram 7).

Balls driven from the right side of the court require the player to use the aiming point of zone 3 to achieve a crosscourt pass; the line between zones 4 and 5 should be used to successfully hit a down-the-line pass (Diagram 8).

Zone 3 (crosscourt pass) and the line between zones 1 and 2 (down-the-line pass) should be used as visual targets when the player strikes balls from the left side of the court (Diagram 9).

Once the drive/passing shot to the corners has been mastered, the next step is to develop variations of the crosscourt pass to keep your opponent off balance. One progression of the crosscourt pass, using the *Zone Method*, has been illustrated in Diagram 10. This type of passing shot, involving the side wall, would be used when your opponent has assumed a center court position.

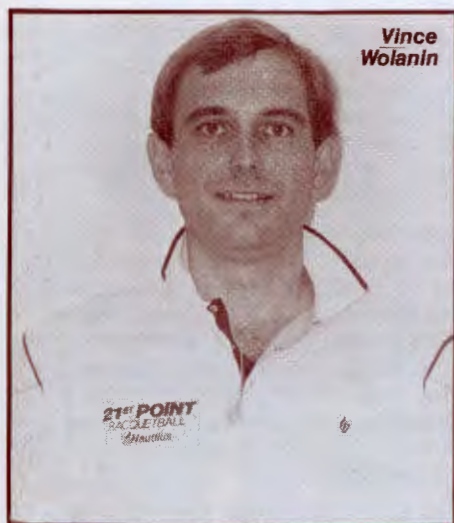
Skill improvement may not occur overnight for the beginning racquetball player, but when systematic instructional techniques are employed, learning time can be reduced. The *Zone Method* offers an efficient means of reducing trial and error learning, fostering thought processes regarding ball placement, and providing the player with feedback on each shot.

For pinpoint ball placement—use the *Zone Method*. ●

David C. Pizarro is Assistant Professor of Physical Education, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS.

Put The Power Step Into Your Game

by Vince Wolanin



One of the most frequent questions I am asked when giving lessons is, how can a student improve the power portion of his game? A lot of articles have been written concerning the wrist snap and how it can help improve the player's power. This is not, however, the complete answer.

My personal background is extensive in the principles of throwing a baseball, dating back to my American Legion and intercollegiate pitching days. Throwing a baseball at a high rate of speed, which is what a pitcher attempts to do, requires excellent footwork which in turn, transmits the power stored up in the lower body to the transmission device (your arm) which releases the baseball and propels it toward home plate.

The fundamentals which separate a true fastball pitcher of super speed from your normal baseball player is really laid in the footwork used to transmit that power to or through the object. This essential fundamental, if learned properly, can do wonders to increase the power and accuracy of your shots.

The footwork I speak of is known as the power step.

During the normal stroke, many, if not most, racquetball players block their hips from rotating (I call it "clicking") as they strike the ball. This lack of rotation causes them to experience greatly reduced velocity upon impact.

A secondary, but important, result of this improper footwork is that players often find themselves losing their balance when they try to hit with great force. Sometimes they do hit with greater force, but almost always (there is luck) it is complemented with partial or full loss of control because balance is lost at impact.

Additionally, this causes a slower than normal recovery rate from the stroke (you have to regain your balance before you can begin to retrieve your opponent's shot) meaning that this player will not be able to cover shots as well as he might.

The key is in the hips. And the hips are directly connected to your footwork. In *Figure 1* you see the "normal" racquetball stance with the player facing the side wall, stepping toward the front wall as the ball approaches, front foot still perpendicular to the side wall.

In baseball, this would be equivalent to a batter hitting the ball with a closed stance. However, the baseball hitter opens his hips as he steps toward the pitcher allowing for full weight transfer to take place from back to front foot. It is the weight transfer that holds much of the power, not only in baseball hitting, but racquetball hitting as well.

When you see a big, strong guy on the court unable to generate the power of that pipsqueak opponent of his, it's usually because by taking this "normal" stroke, the hips are unable to fully rotate, thus they are blocked. Instead of a booming shot, the behemoth gets an off-balance, out-of-control hit.

Some players have further complicated this situation by learning how to come out of this mis-hit position. But careful analysis on video points out time after time that these players are actually making their bad situation worse, since the "remedy" in this case usually forces the player to move his head too quickly at or just prior to impact. Thus, more control is lost.

In *Figure 2* Bruce Christensen gives me

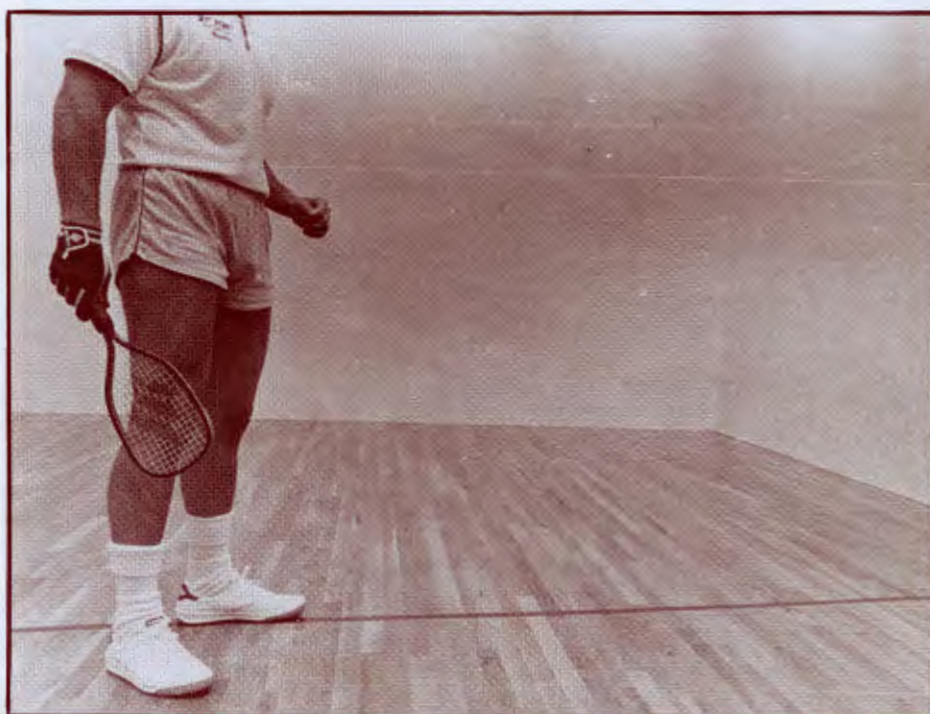


Figure 1. The "normal" forehand stance.

Figure 2. A slight push causes a stumbling player using a closed stance.



a slight push, and because of my footwork positioning, I easily lose my balance. In *Figure 3*, having now taken a more open stance, Bruce's push does not cause me to stumble awkwardly, rather, my head is able to remain concentrated on the hitting zone.

The critical element is the open stance. With my front foot pointing more toward the front wall (rather than the side wall) and my head on the ball, I am able to use my lower body to rotate my hips to generate additional power. The racquet stays square at the point of impact because I am now able to hit down and through (*Figure 4*) the ball for a straighter shot.

Also note how my rear knee is almost touching the floor as I stroke into and through the ball. This bent knee is characteristic of a powerful and solid stroke established with the open stance.

Once again, move your feet into the open stance, transfer your weight while slightly rotating your hips toward the front wall, and snap your wrist at impact.

For practice, stand about five feet from your forehand side wall with your front foot in the open position (*Figure 5*) and

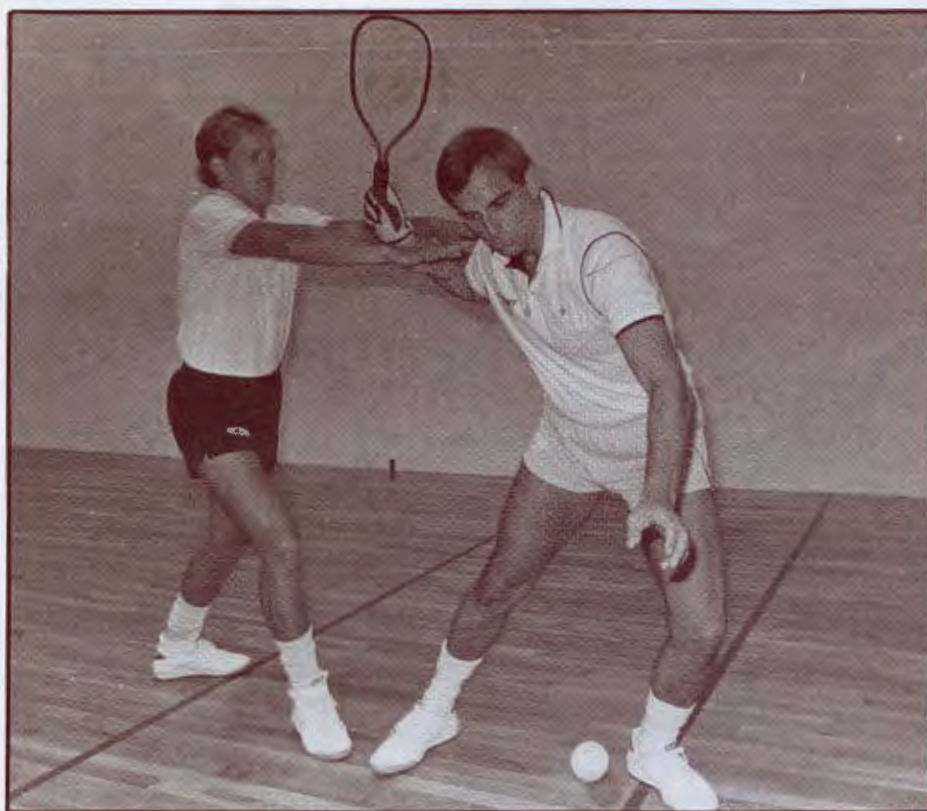


Figure 3. The same push has no effect on a player with a more solid, open stance.



Figure 4. Following through on the power stroke.

Figure 5. Power stroke, side view.



hit a variety of shots: kills into the right corner, pinches, and cross court kills and passes until you can do it automatically (this will take more than one session).

Keep in mind that during practice, you can exaggerate the actual motion of open stance footwork, knowing that in real match play you probably won't have enough time to open up quite this much. However, for purposes of practice, a little exaggeration in the beginning is fine. The real proof comes when you shots are coming off the racquet face straight as an arrow without deviation as though on a string to the front wall.

If you learn to properly use the open stance in practice, I guarantee you will no longer fall towards the front wall or lose your balance as you attempt to hit

with greater power. Instead, you will generate that additional power, along with better control (and thus, more victories) naturally with the open stance. ●

Vince Wolanin is president of the 21st Point Club, Albany, NY and also a member of the Ektelon and Asahi Professional Advisory Staffs.

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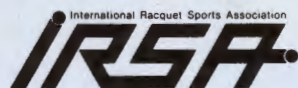
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I approached the Convention as a developer of a new club. I learned about streamlining management, saving costs, and selling to the corporate market. I learned about electronic funds transfer, and food and beverage. As a result I was able to present to my owners a full report projecting the operation of a new club, complete with financial facts and the experience of IRSA clubs to back me up *Kevin Molony, Northern Kentucky Racquet Club, Crescent Springs, Kentucky*

The whole Convention impressed the hell out of me. I've been in other businesses where successes are not shared. The openness of the IRSA clubs made all the difference. Questions that I have been wrestling with were covered by other club owners, and I got some answers that I was looking for *Al Lockhart, Pegasus Racquet and Health, Augusta, Maine*

Every year I get at least one good idea for my club. I look forward to the open sharing of ideas and perspectives. Since the barrier of direct competition has been removed, clubs can honestly share their problems and successes *Frank Rawcliffe, Celebrity Courts, Warwick, Rhode Island.*

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The Fitness Center

If We Knew Then What We Know Now

It was 10 years ago that I began to play professional racquetball. The prize money wasn't much, but the competition was stimulating and the people I met on and off the court never ceased to amaze me.

There was Charlie Brumfield, who played our sport like a chess game. His shot selection and superior strategy reduced the most talented of opponents into losers nearly every time.

Among the women pros, Peggy Steding dominated. She was the first player (male or female) to introduce power to the game. Her shots were hit too hard and too accurately for any woman to get even double figures against her.

What really sticks out in my mind about the way racquetball tournaments were then and the way they are now, though, is that most of the top players did not train off the court to the extent that they do now. In fact, some of us didn't train off the court at all. Our workouts consisted of playing and practicing shots for hours on end.

My first brush with fitness came when I attended a racquetball clinic conducted by Steve Strandemo. His knowledge of game strategy and shot selection inspired us all to practice even harder. What puzzled a few of us was that we had heard this "rumor" that Strandemo spent many hours off the court working out.

I was standing with a group of players when someone said, *"You know Strandemo runs and lifts weights too. He's probably the most well conditioned athlete on the tour."*

The funny thing about this statement was not what was said, but how little it affected any of us at the time. It was as if someone said, *"Oh yes, he speaks fluent French also."* Nice information, but of no interest to us and our games.

I am sure that if anyone were to ask Strandemo he would tell you just how important all those years of off court training were to the success of his career. He was a pioneer of fitness and racquetball.

Other memories I have of the tour in the early 70's were that while all of us were obsessed with strategy, shot selection and accuracy, few of us understood the importance of conditioning and proper nutrition.



Jean Sauser

Player nutrition programs were practically non-existent. A few of the more "radical" pros who did have nutrition programs were simply thought of as "different." Most of us didn't stop to think that their attempts at good nutrition were amounting to anything that might help them win.

Once, while having breakfast with Steve Mondry, he explained the importance of carbohydrates to overall athletic performance. He was eating pancakes and I was having my usual bacon, eggs and coffee.

I told him that this "carbohydrate thing" was interesting, all the while thinking to myself, *"This guy is nice but crazy. He's going to gain 100 pounds!"*

In those days, many of us felt that the possibility of exercise off the court combined with a good nutrition program contributing to a winning performance was the same as the possibility of life on Mars.

Feeling Fit With Proper Food

by Gigi Horn

Don't misunderstand — the pros did work out, but it was mainly on the court. Nutrition was thought of mainly in terms of protein filled meals and an absence of alcohol. Pros did not train off the court with the intensity and knowledge that is available today. That would have been impossible.

Until recently, almost all sports suffered from a lack of overall fitness knowledge. The nice thing about today's fitness revolution is that it has contributed greatly to the ever-improving racquetball performances on the pro level and on the amateur level.

Most racquetball clubs have been reporting an increase in the skill level of their competitive players as well as fewer injuries among their membership.

At the top tournament levels, the players will tell you how hard they train off the court — extensively,

I often look back to my early days on the tour and think *"If I only knew then what I know now,"* but the sadness doesn't last long. What's past always serves as a good base for the present and future.

It also makes me laugh a little too! ●

Food is fuel.

The amount and type of fuel your body receives affects not only how your body feels, but how efficiently it can operate. Maximum energy for daily living and leisure, including fitness and racquetball programs, requires premium fuel.

Think for a moment of how you fuel your body — and how you really feel. Whether you are a committed athlete or week-end warrior wishing to achieve maximum energy, you may want to consider fueling with more "premium" food choices.

Wise nutritional choices help to supply the energy reserves needed to train for strength, aerobic power, and racquetball. The foods which are eaten supply calories (energy) to the body. Spending one's allotment of calories each day brings many choices to each of us. Everyone wants us to spend our calories with them, from fast food chains and all their offers, to our personal friends who offer us their "goodies."

As a consumer of premium fuel with the benefit of maximum energy, we should pick and choose, always making the best available choice for the situation. Our goal is to spend our total calories in the following way: Complex Carbohydrates 60-65%; Protein 10-15%; Fat 20-25%.

The number of calories you need per day depends on your age, sex, and activity level. You might have different goals for your body composition, but one common goal we all have is that of keeping our percentage of body fat at a reasonable level.

Overfatness taxes all the systems of the body; fat is non-contributing tissue. The fat between the muscle and the skin which causes one to take on a more rounded, soft look may also contribute to feelings of not only fatigue and irritability, but restlessness, and general sluggishness or lack of energy.

Learning to "eat the numbers" with complex carbohydrates predominant (60-65% of food selections), fat held to a moderate level (20-25%), and protein at a reasonable level (10-15%) will supply sufficient nutrients and energy for even the most intense activity schedule. A poor nutritional lifestyle makes it harder for your body to recuperate between workouts and may also be a factor when there is a lack of progress of "staleness" during training.

For top energy and performance your body needs premium fuel. Your daily food choices (nutrition lifestyle) is one aspect of sports conditioning which is often overlooked, yet it should be part of any fitness/conditioning/racquetball training program. The following five suggestions may be used as guidelines in a gradual strategy to achieve maximum energy levels by choosing to eat foods which give you something back for your calories.

The first guideline, which you may already have recognized, is to increase the proportion of the calories taken in the form of complex carbohydrates and to decrease the percentage of calories consumed in fat. Presently, Americans take in an alarming 42% of their total daily calories in fat.



Gigi Horn

I have noticed that as athletes and fitness/health enthusiasts find out where the fat is in their diet, they are willing to make a few compromises, especially when the changes don't affect the taste of the food. Fat is a very highly concentrated form of energy, or calories. When too much is taken in and not enough is worked off, this excess accumulates as body fat. By reducing the amount of fat you eat and by maintaining an aerobic exercise program, you can avoid the storage of this excess fat.

The only challenge you may face is that fat is everywhere and it tastes good! You must learn where the fat is and also get past the taste factor. A high-fat meal may taste good, but the effects on energy level and performance may not feel so good an hour or so later.

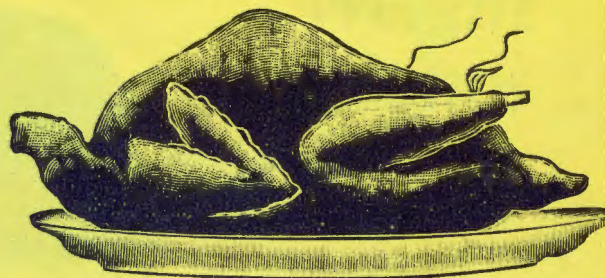
Complex carbohydrates are the fuel of choice for usable energy quickly, and they are also a clean burning fuel for the body. What are some examples of complex carbohydrates? Foods from the grain category are great suppliers of energy. These include brown rice, whole grain bread, rolls, crackers, pancakes, waffles, pasta, and cereals.

Yes, these are the foods that were so maligned for many years because it was thought that they were "fattening." These complex carbohydrates supply glycogen to the muscles more quickly than other foodstuffs. The more you exercise, the more energy foods you will need to maintain energy.

The following example will demonstrate the change in thinking: When ordering in a restaurant or cooking at home, many individuals would choose the meat selection, such as steak, and then avoid the potatoes and rolls at the meal because of "extra calories." It is more common now to see chicken or fish as the meat of choice, in smaller quantities, with perhaps two potatoes, a roll and vegetables. By changing the type and quantity of meat, the percentage of fat in the total meal is reduced, and more of the calories are spent on complex carbohydrates for energy.

Typical breakfasts often include many sources of fat. Eggs, bacon, sausage, and gravy are a few of the culprits. A two eggs, three pieces of bacon, biscuits and gravy breakfast has a greater percentage of fat than a one egg, one piece of bacon, cereal, and fruit breakfast. Carbohydrates and protein have four calories per gram of foodstuff, whereas fats contain nine calories per gram.

It is refreshing to see the increased quantity of food you can consume if you are making the most of your choices from the complex carbohydrate group. Another benefit from increasing the amount of complex carbohydrates is the fiber which is



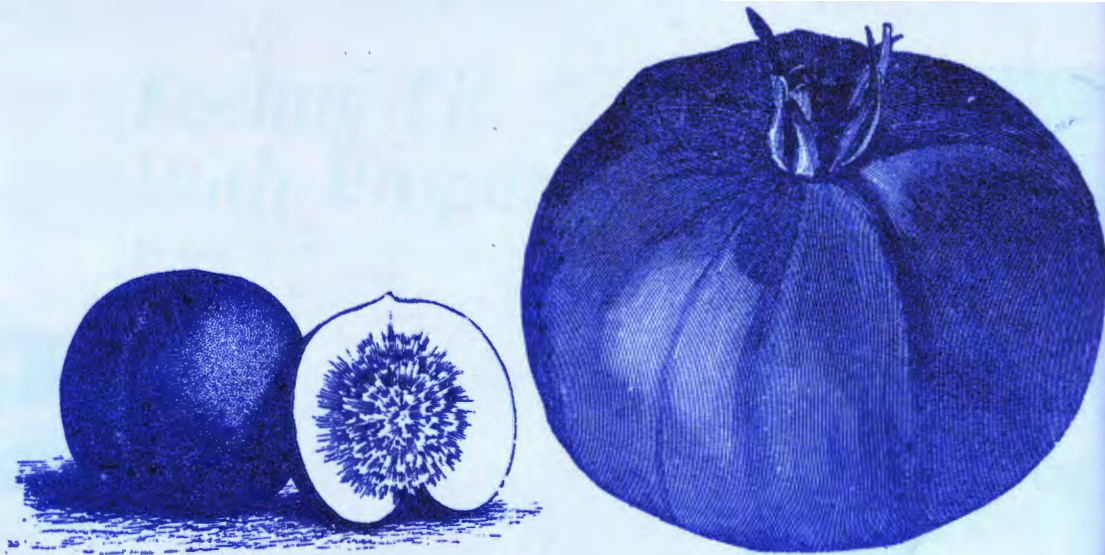
naturally present in these foods. A high fat diet lacks fiber which contributes to constipation and its side effects. When foods don't move through as they should, it affects energy level and may lead to chronic diseases such as cancer of the colon. The fiber in complex carbohydrates acts like a broom in scraping the sides of the intestines to clean them out.

Most people eat meat as their main source of protein. Unfortunately, some meats contain a high percentage of fat along with the protein. Meats which are high in fat and worth cutting down on include red meat (steak, hamburger, franks, luncheon meat) and pork products (bacon, sausage). Meats with a lower percent of fat include chicken, turkey, and fish. Vegetable sources of protein include beans, seeds, and legumes.

Another way to reduce fat in your diet is to try and avoid fried foods. Foods which are baked, broiled, poached, steamed, or barbecued make a better selection. Milk, cream and other dairy products made with whole milk are also higher in fat. Choosing skim and low-fat milk, yogurt, ice-cream and cheeses can help considerably in reducing fat.

Using fats such as butter, salad dressing, and mayonnaise sparingly decreases the fat intake also. For example, in a restaurant always order your dressing on the side so you can be the judge of the quantity, and request low-cal for even more savings of fat intake.

Low-calorie and no oil salad dressings taste similarly and save many grams



of fat. If you are a tuna fan, try the water packed next time instead of the oil packed and avoid those extra fat calories for an even better taste.

The second guideline in selecting premium fuel for your body is to eat more whole grains. When wheat is processed, the fiber part (bran and germ) is often removed to improve the storage quality of the grain. This is how milled flour products lose their original nutrients (such as B vitamins, vitamin E, and iron) and fiber.

Because of this lack of fiber, whole grain products are a better choice than white flour products. It may not be possible to eliminate all white flour products at first, but you will be rewarded with an increased energy level for living and training if you concentrate your choices on whole grain products and decrease your choices of white flour products.

Becoming a "label detective" helps you to check and see what is in the foods you are choosing. Look for whole wheat flour (preferably stone-ground) as the first ingredient when shopping for your "daily bread," pasta, and crackers. Many of the so-called wheat breads list enriched white flour as the first ingredient, and later in the label you will notice caramel coloring.

Be an informed consumer, select only whole grain products. Other grains and vegetables also may be used in pasta and crackers such as spinach noodles and artichoke flour. Many people are pleasantly surprised to discover that whole grain spaghetti,

lasagna, macaroni, and other products taste equal to or better than their white flour counterparts.

If the brown color of the whole wheat pasta is too much at first, try mixing the noodles half and half. Easy-to-prepare, real food mixes (such as buckwheat pancakes or carrot cake) are also convenient. They taste wonderfully and are a great source of energy. Most major supermarkets now offer some selections of these products.

The third guideline is to include more raw fruits and vegetables in your diet. In the whole or unprocessed form raw fruit and vegetables supply not only complex carbohydrates, but essential nutrients and fiber. "Living" food is energy food—that which has had little or no tampering.

For example, an apple is a better source of readily usable nutrients than a fried apple snack. It also contains less fat, and much more fiber. Fresh fruits and vegetables make great snacks that pack easily for on-the-run energy needs. Choose a variety of colors to obtain trace minerals.

Raw fruits and vegetables have one additional benefit for racquetball and fitness enthusiasts. Because of the high water content in these foods the body is more fully hydrated during activity. Delaying or avoiding fatigue can partially be accomplished by maintaining a sufficient amount of water in the body. This brings up the fourth guideline which is to drink plenty of fluids every day, and more on your workout days.

A reasonable amount of fluids would include 4-6 glasses, preferably including mostly water. Becoming dehydrated during a workout or competition depletes the energy level causing fatigue, a deterioration in performance, and an increase in body temperature.

Thirst may not adequately reflect the body's need for fluid replacement; therefore, it is important to try and stay ahead of the water loss. Consuming water a few hours prior to a workout, or racquetball game will help you get ahead. During your strenuous activity period it is a good idea to weigh yourself before and after exercise to determine the amount of fluid that needs to be replaced.

The fifth and last guideline for maximum energy presented in this article will be to try and reduce salt and sugar in the food choices. Most of the foods which are commercially prepared contain large amounts of both.

Ketchup, for example, is 29% sugar. Checking the labels will help to determine which ingredients are present and in what quantities, because ingredients are listed in descending order. The first ingredient on the label is the most predominate, and on down the line. When sugar and salt appear in the first five listed you may wish to make another selection. By spending calories on complex carbohydrates such as raw fruits and vegetables and whole grains rather than sugary, salty treats, you gain more nutrition per calorie and more energy for racquetball and training.

Gigi Horn holds a master's degree in exercise physiology and nutrition. She is the owner of Gigi Horn Enterprises, a firm which does computerized nutritional analysis and custom fitness programs for individuals and corporations. She is also a racquetball teaching professional at Brookhaven Country Club in Dallas, Texas.



Photos by Jim Sauter

Eating a candy bar just prior to a workout or athletic event (to gain so called "quick energy") may leave you more tired at the finish than if you had not eaten it, and thus may detract from your maximum performance. Avoiding sugar "highs and lows" through moderation maintains a proper blood sugar level.

Many traditionally sweet desserts have more natural and wholesome counterparts — such as bran or oatmeal cookies (with whole wheat flour) and frozen yogurt. These foods can be a compromise and still a treat. Sweets that are high in fat (chocolate candies, pies, cakes) are not good sources of carbohydrate for replenishing muscle energy stores. Refined sugar foods and snacks should not replace balanced meals.

Racquetball players can reap the benefits of higher energy levels by striving toward these nutritional goals.

A quick review of the major points in supplying premium fuel for maximum energy include:

- 1) Increase complex carbohydrates and decrease fat in daily food selections;
- 2) Eat more whole grain products and less enriched white flour products;
- 3) Consume more raw fruits and vegetables;
- 4) Drink plenty of fluids every day, especially before, during, and after workouts;
- 5) Cut down on salt and sugar.

Whether traveling or at home try to make educated choices for optimal foods. During tournaments, or competitions of any kind, it is simple to add fresh fruits and whole grains to restaurant meals. Spend your daily calories on foods which will give you the most nourishment, and therefore energy, for your calories. Maximum energy for fitness and racquetball requires premium fuel. ●

Upper Body Workouts: Weight Machines

with Bob Nolan

Bob Nolan is associate professor and chairman of the Physical Education Department, William Rainey Harper Junior College, Palatine, IL.

All right, so you weren't born with the upper body of a Marty Hogan. Consequently, you may not be able to hit the ball as hard as you need or want to for competition.

Perhaps you find that you cannot counterpunch your opponent's power shots or that you are constantly getting blown off the court by players with less strategy and ability than you. Having power and increased flexibility when you need it is what machine weight training is all about.

If you ask Gregg or Dave Peck (two pro players who've had the honor of beating the more "natural" Hogan), they'll tell you which weight machines they've used to do it.

On the women's side of the racquetball picture, two of the all time greats, Lynn Adams and Shannon Wright, use weight machines to condition. In fact, Shannon has been instrumental in helping the experts develop weight training regimens for top flight racquetball performance.

The top male and female players tend to agree that there is something to



Photo by Jim Sauter

developing your upper body strength to its fullest potential for racquetball. Here's how you can get started:

A Quick Review

In the *November* issue, we gave a series of guidelines for getting started with machines. Don't forget their importance. They are:

1. To warm up first and cool down afterwards
2. Begin with the large muscles groups
3. Do one set of 8-12 repetitions to muscle failure
4. Breathe properly
5. Rest at least a day between workouts
6. Don't play racquetball immediately after a workout
7. Be consistent
8. Chart your progress

Warm Up

Here are three specific warm up procedures that you can use before your workout to ensure that it is a safe and productive one:

1. *Stretch With A Pole.* By placing a wooden or light metal pole on your shoulders behind your head and twisting your upper body in both directions, you can loosen and stretch your back muscles. Begin slowly at first and as you feel yourself begin to warm and loosen up, twist farther in each direction. You should do this for three to five minutes.
2. *Execute Torso Pulls.* By reaching around behind your head with one hand and around behind your back

with the opposite hand (*Figure 1*), trying to touch them together, you additionally stretch your upper body and increase its flexibility. Alternate hands after you've pulled slowly and statically to a count of 10. Repeat the procedure three to five times.

3. *Pedal The Stationary Bike 8-10 Minutes.* This is an excellent way to get blood to your muscles and warm them up for exercise. Simply pedal at a moderate rate (not to exceed your training heart rate) to get blood flowing to your muscles.

Now you are ready to start working your upper body.

The Pullover

For: The Latissimus Dorsi muscle located in your back. This muscle is involved when you pull your racquet up and back to its ready position before striking your shot. Building its strength gives you the ability to set up quicker and strengthens your back to resist injury.

Pictured: Pullover Machine — Nautilus (*Figure 2*).



Starting Position: Adjust the seat so that your shoulder joints are in line with the axis of the cams. Fasten the seat belt and press the foot pedal so that the elbow pads come around to eye level. Now you can place your elbows in the pads. Remove your legs from the pedal and slowly rotate your elbows back as far as possible.

Phase 1: Rotate your elbows down until the bar touches your midsection. Do this to the count of two. Pause for the count of one. Exhale through this movement.

Phase 2: Return the bar slowly to the starting position resisting it all the way back to a count of four. Inhale through this movement.

Additional Tips: Keep your head pressed firmly against the seat pad and look straight ahead throughout the entire exercise. Also, once you've finished your set, place your foot back on the foot pedal and press downward so that you can pull the elbow pads forward again to get out of the machine.

The Shoulder Press

For: Deltoid, Triceps and Trapezius muscles. Strengthening these muscles fortifies your overarm and side arm shots. In short, you'll swing a quicker and stronger racquet.

Pictured: Shoulder Press Machine — Polaris (*Figure 3*).



Starting Position: Sit facing the machine with your back resting firmly against the pad. Select the desired height of the movement arm by inserting the pin into the proper slot. Position your hands on the bars with an overhand grip, comfortably next to your shoulders.

Phase 1: Press your arms upward to a count of two and exhale as you do so. Pause at the top for one count.

Phase 2: Slowly lower the handle bars down to shoulder level again to a four count, resisting the motion all the way. Inhale as you do this.

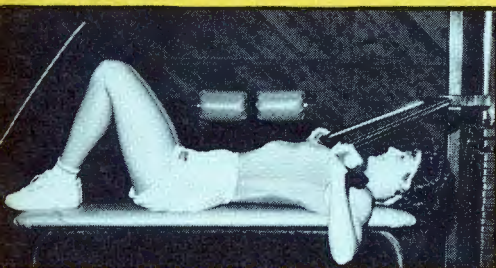
Additional Tips: Do not lock your elbow when you extend your arms at the end of Phase 1.

The Chest Press

For: Pectoral muscles, Deltoid muscles and Triceps. Strengthening these muscles will add stroke strength as well as enhance your ability to counterpunch your opponent's power shots.

Pictured: Chest Press Station of Universal Gym (Figures 4-5).

Starting Position: Lie flat on the bench so that the bars are positioned directly over your chest and shoulder area. Grip the bar with an overhand grip. Hands are positioned on the bars slightly more than a shoulder's width apart. Keep your feet up on the bench and your hips flat on the bench to protect your back from possible strain.



Phase 1: Press the bar straight up and exhale to the count of two. When your arms straighten out at the top, pause for one count.

Phase 2: Slowly lower the bar back down, resisting it all the way to the count of four. Inhale as you do so.

Additional Tips: Do not lock your elbows when you extend your arms during the first phase of this exercise. Simply push the bar up until the arms straighten just short of your elbows locking.

The Bicep Curl

For: Biceps of the arm. Builds additional stroke strength while adding to strength and reaction time for front court play.

Pictured: Multi-Bicep Machine — Nautilus (Figure 6).



Starting Position: Place your elbows on the pads in line with the axis of the cams. Adjust the seat so that your shoulders are slightly lower than your elbows. Grip the bars with an underhand grip. Your arms should be fully extended but your elbows should not be locked.

Phase 1: Curl both arms up toward your shoulders until they reach their fully contracted position. Exhale as you do so. This curl-up occurs to the count of two and you should pause for one count upon completing the curl.

Phase 2: Slowly lower the weight back down to your original arms extended starting position, resisting it all the way back.

Additional Notes: Resist using your legs or upper body to pull the weight up. Concentrate on just using your biceps to perform the exercise.

Reverse Grip Bicep Curl

For: Building strength in the forearms. Prevents tendinitis and helps add strength to the wrist snap that is known as the bottom line of power in your racquetball strokes.

Pictured: Multi Biceps Machine — (Figure 6).

Procedure: The procedure is the same as described in the Bicep Curl exercise with the exception of the grip. Simply grip the bars with an overhand grip instead of an underhand grip.

Additional Notes: Since your forearm muscles will not be as strong as your biceps, begin your program with lighter weight than you would for the Bicep Curl.

Abdominal Exercises

For: Rectus Abdominus and External Oblique muscles.

Pictured: Abdominal Machine — Nautilus (Figures 7-8).

Starting Position: Sit in the machine. Locate the axis of the rotation of the machine which is parallel to the separation of the seat back. The lower part of your sternum should be at this level. Adjust the seat to the proper level.

Place your ankles behind the roller pads, spread your knees and lightly grasp the handles over your shoulders. Sit erect. Keep your shoulders and head pressed firmly against the seat back.



Phase 1: Contract your abdominal muscles to shorten the distance between your rib cage and your navel. Do not pull the handle bars or pull against the foot pads to execute this movement—use only your abdominal muscles. Exhale as you perform this part of the exercise to a count of two. Pause for one count when you've contracted your abdominal muscles all the way.

Phase 2: Slowly return to the starting position to the count of four controlling the momentum all the way. Inhale.

Cool Down

When you've finished your upper body workout, cool down by stretching with the pole and executing torso pulls the way you did in the warm up.

Charting Your Progress

It is extremely important to know how many repetitions you were able to execute and at what weight so that the next time you work out you can increase the weight if need be or work with the same load. This can only be done by keeping a record of your progress.

Remember, you want to work with a weight load that causes muscular failure somewhere between the 8th and 12th repetition of the exercise. So, if over a period of days, you find that you are easily executing 12 reps of a specific exercise in good form, you'll want to review your record and increase the weight load so that you are back to struggling between the 8th and 12th repetition again. This will enable you to continue to build strength.

Most clubs provide forms you can use to chart your progress. If your club doesn't, you can use the form below.

Chart Key

MACH #: The order of the machines. If you begin your workout on the Chest Press Machine, then it gets the number 1.

Machine Name: The name of the machine goes across from the number in the sequence of your workout.

Date: The date of your workout.

S: The number of sets you are performing. (This number is almost always 1.)

R: The number of repetitions you executed.

W: The weight load you were on. Some machines list pounds and some simply numbers. Record either. In the case where the machine lists both, using a number is easier.

Instruction Is Valuable

The program suggested here is a good starting point for weight training. However, if you have access to a certified instructor, take advantage. Nothing can compete with a personalized weight training program.

Safety

There used to be a saying among weight training fanatics that kept the rest of us away from weights during those years. That saying was, "No Pain, No Gain." Fitness specialists from around the country are uniting to get this slogan into the past — where it belongs.

If you feel any pain or extreme discomfort working out on the machines, stop immediately. Get a doctor's advice about what the problem might be. Or, see your fitness center instructor if you feel (s)he is competent enough to be able to diagnose what is wrong. Under no circumstances should you continue to exercise if you are uncomfortable or in pain. Seek professional advice to remedy your situation.

The bottom line is: you can gain and it should be without pain.

Summary

Machine weight training, when conducted safely on a regular basis and using the proper training techniques, can spell the difference between victory and defeat on the racquetball court. If it's not a part of your off court game strategy yet, it should be. ●

Weight Training Record Sheet

MACH- #	Machine Name	Date:			Date:			Date:			Date:			Date:			Date:			Date:		
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New Products



Omega Duffle Sports Bag

Today's most popular style, all purpose bag, the Omega Duffle is rayon canvas with a water-proof vinyl backing. Detachable, adjustable shoulder straps and hand straps accompany this product with full length zipper closure, zipper wet pocket, and open side pockets available as well.

Each Omega Duffle comes individually poly-bagged with choice in colors of Sky blue, Navy, and camel.

For more information contact Omega, 9200 Cody, P.O. Box 14926, Overland Park, KS 66214, (913) 492-3994.



S'port Wrap Introduced

If you've got sore ankles or have ever sprained your ankle, you've experienced one of life's 10 most frustrating moments: trying to tape your ankle.

Tape with a bandage that stretches out of shape when you use it. And pulls at your ankle. You never know how tight to wrap it. Or where to find the little clips that hold it together. Or how to keep from sticking yourself once you find those little clips.

S'port Wrap eliminates all those problems.

It is truly do-it-yourself. You don't need tape or fasteners or pins. It is made of a wide band of woven fabric that supports your ankle, yet won't pull at your skin. One quick wrap around your ankle and another around your foot in a simple figure eight gets the job done. And, loops are sewn at each end of the fabric to lock the wrap to your heel.

S'port Wrap is now available in more than 20,000 drug stores across the country and retails for about \$6. It is manufactured under the All-American brand by the Futuro Division of the Jung Corporation, Cincinnati, Ohio, one of the country's leading makers of health and sport braces for more than 75 years.

ANJON SPORTS CONDITIONING

Anjon Computerized Sports Conditioning

The Anjon system represents the latest research and techniques for conditioning; it is the first system to integrate all aspects of conditioning.

The software includes personnel management; nutrition, body composition, bicycle ergometry testing and workouts, and weight training. Nutrition is a vital component of the training regimen, and food choice changes help improve both body composition (the ratio of fat to muscle) and sports performance.

The computer may be effectively used for educating, testing and analysis, designing workouts, and updating personnel files to monitor individuals progress.

Anjon runs on several different types of hardware. For more information contact Gigi Horn Enterprises, 3807 Vinecrest, Dallas, TX 75229, (214) 357-2691.



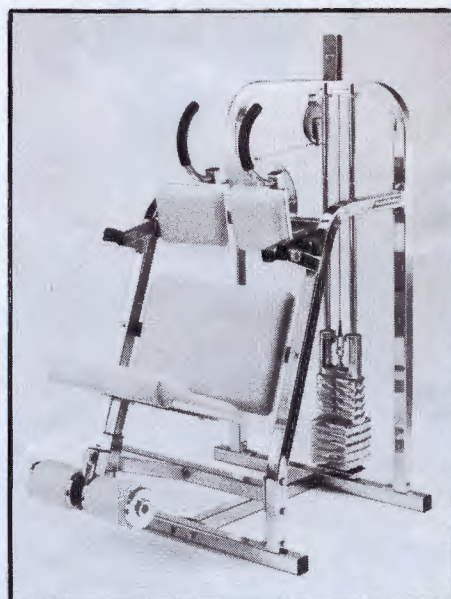
A'ME Grip

Power grip by A'ME, is the newest and most advanced racquetball grip on the market. The raised triangles and small dimples grip the glove so that you don't have to grip the handle so tight.

Handle size doesn't change with the Power Grip, because it is approximately the same thickness as the original leather. The grip can be easily put on with gasket sealer, which will lube the handle for mounting, and then dry tacky to hold the grip in place.

Power grip comes in five colors: red, blue, yellow, grey, and black. Try the Power Grip, you will like the feel!

For further information contact A.M.E. Manufacturing, 244 Mercury Circle, Pomona, CA 91768, (714) 594-1767.



Paramount Abdominal Machine

Continuing its tradition of quality, Paramount Fitness now introduces its recently redesigned Abdominal Machine.

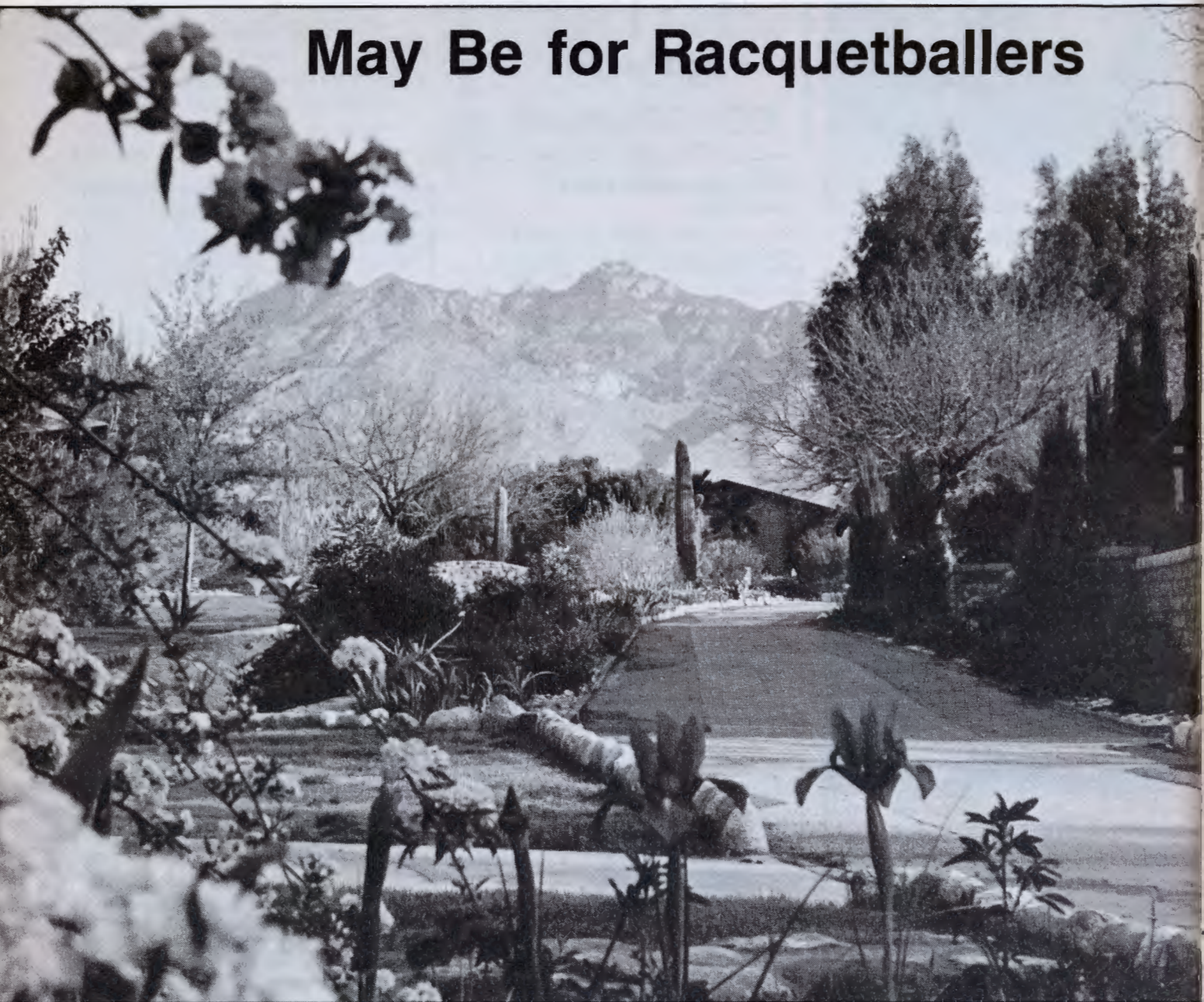
Addressing one of today's most common fitness needs, the Abdominal Machine develops and conditions the abdominal muscles. Isolating and concentrating on the abdominals, it offers a great alternative to conventional sit ups.

The new design has better hand placement and is easier to initiate. The Abdominal Machine has an adjustable seat height for users from 5'4" to 6'4". Standard weight stacks are 85 pounds, and optional stacks of 110 pounds are available.

Two-inch tubular steel design provides structural strength, and nickel chrome plating offers cosmetic enhancement. Includes lanyard so selector pins cannot be lost or misplaced and fits in 3½ by 4½-foot space. Shipping weight is 290 pounds.

For further information, contact the Sales Department, Paramount Fitness Equipment Corp., 6450 E. Bandini Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90040, (213) 721-2121.

New Look In Health Spas May Be for Racquetballers



Canyon Ranch, Tucson, AZ

by Victor Block

In Wisconsin, members of the Meyers family go their separate ways after enjoying lunch together. Marilyn and Paul head for the downhill ski slopes; sons Louis and John opt for cross-country skiing over the snow-covered golf course, and Nancy joins a new-found teenage friend for ice skating on the frozen lake.

Activities are different in sun-drenched Tucson, AZ. There Jane and Tim Coss fill the afternoon with exercise and weight training classes, a bike ride and a dip in the pool.

Things are much the same at Palm-Aire in southern Florida. After their health-oriented lunch, Penny and Arlen Blechman swim laps in the pool, visit the nine-station fitness course, then discuss which of the five golf courses to play that afternoon.

While the weather and specific activities differ, the settings enjoyed by these three families have much in common. Each offers a variety of things to do that are found at leading resorts. Guests at each enjoy plush accommodations and amenities associated with first-class vacation destinations.



A swimming workout at Palm Aire

Outdoor track at Palm Aire



They all combine a vacation atmosphere with the availability of a wide selection of spa health and fitness features. Finally, each has racquetball courts for the use of guests.

The thought of a health and fitness spa may conjure up images of a "fat farm" frequented primarily by aging women plus a handful of men. While that picture may have been somewhat valid in years past, it's far from the truth today.

The spa movement in the United States, which for decades has lagged behind the popularity of spas throughout Europe, has come of age. Spas today are frequented by a virtual cross-section of Americans—the elderly *and* youthful; men as well as women; couples, families and single visitors; well-to-do and, at least to an extent greater than in the past, the not-so-rich.

If you envision a spa vacation as a self-imposed masochistic period of discomfort with the goal of perspiring, pounding and starving off pounds, think again! Spas today combine the very best in recreational and sports activities and facilities with sophisticated diet, exercise and fitness programs. And—as part of this regimen aimed at combining health, fitness and fun—an increasing number of spas have racquetball courts.

Canyon Ranch Spa in Arizona is a case in point. It has four air conditioned racquetball courts located in the main spa building for which there is no playing charge to guests. Free loaner equipment also is available.

The racquetball staff includes three professionals led by highly-ranked Bo Blinksi, the Canyon Ranch sports director. "Seventy-five percent of all sports is

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mental," he believes, and his approach to both playing and teaching is as much through the mind as the body.

Fitness at Canyon Ranch can be a gradual goal, dictated by the condition of each guest. It often begins with short scenic walks, then escalates into water exercises, body toning and yoga. There are indoor and outdoor swimming, bicycling, and well-equipped gyms.

For those so inclined, a full array of whirlpools and saunas, massages and herbal wraps, floatations and facials is available. The spa serves what it calls "healthy gourmet food," and health educators and nutritionists are on hand to offer advice about good eating, weight loss and proper ways to shop for balanced diets.

Needless to say, the type of facilities and activities available at most spas do not come inexpensively. The basic daily double-room rate at Canyon Ranch is \$134-\$145 per person. A seven-night plan—including body massages, a facial, an herbal wrap and other features—costs \$970; the 10-night package is priced at \$1,355.

For guests interested in concentrating on their game—be it racquetball, handball or tennis—the Sports Breakaway packages provides full use of spa facilities, exercise classes, rooms and meals—plus an intensive period of lesson and practice time. For further information, contact Canyon Ranch Spa, 8600 E. Rockcliff Rd., Tucson, AZ 85715; or call toll-free (1-800) 742-9000 or collect (602) 749-9000.

The Spa at Olympia Resort, located about halfway between Milwaukee and Madison, WI, combines a health and fitness regimen focused as much upon the mental and emotional attitude of guests as their physical well being with recreational activities. These include downhill and cross country skiing, golf, tennis, horseback riding and hiking.

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Olympia seeks to appeal to men as well as women, providing separate men's facilities that feature weight and exercise equipment, herbal wrap room, a yoga and exercise classroom, and *loofa* treatment (neck-to-ankle application of an oil, salt and water paste followed by a sudsy rinse and loofa mitt massage).

Notes Doris Hogue, spa director at Olympia, "A man will enjoy the relaxation of an herbal wrap or body massage as much as a woman. He also needs to get away from it all."

The two-night Spa Sampler—including three meals a day, a massage and facial, two exercise classes daily, and use of the spa facilities—is priced until next April at \$226 per person (double room occupancy). The mid-week four-night package—including room, meals and various other features—costs \$438.50 per person (double occupancy).

For additional information, write Olympia Resort and Spa, 1350 Royale Mile Rd., Oconomowoc, WI 53066, or call toll-free outside Wisconsin (1-800) 558-9573; within Wisconsin (414) 567-0311.

As at Olympia and Canyon Ranch, the diet and fitness program at The Spa at Palm-Aire in Florida is geared to the condition and goals of each guest. Based upon an interview, medical examination and testing, each visitor embarks upon a program outlined by the staff physician, cardiologist and dietitian. An exercise prescription, including aerobics and par-course activities, including an outline that may be continued when spa guests return home.

The spa is part of a 1,500 acre resort area which includes three hotels, five 18-hole golf courses, 37 tennis courts and swimming pools. Four racquetball courts are located in the main spa building adjacent to the gymnasium. The courts each have a viewing wall, parquet floors and panel walls. There is no court time charge for spa guests. Free loan racquets, balls and eyeguards are available, and instructors are on hand to give lessons or play with guests.

Daily room rates for mid-December 1984 to mid-April 1985 are \$120-\$135 (single or double occupancy); \$160 for one bedroom suites; \$260 for two bedroom suites. The seven-day Spa Program—which includes room and meals; doctor's examination; fitness tests; daily exercise prescription and take-home exercise packet; daily whirlpool, herbal wrap and body massage; two loofa baths, two Swiss showers and other features—is priced at \$2,254 (single occupancy) or \$3,467 for two people sharing a room.

For additional information or reservations, write The Spa at Palm-Aire, 2501 Palm-Aire Drive North, Pompano Beach, FL 33069, or call toll-free (800) 327-4960 or, within Florida or from Canada, (305) 972-3300.

In addition to the three spas described above, there are others throughout the U.S. where guests may enjoy racquetball at the same time that they work on their diet, health and fitness. Among these are The Pines Fitness & Health Retreat, P.O. Box 473, Covington, LA 70433, telephone (504) 893-4770 and The Phoenix, 111 N. Post Oak Lane, Houston, TX 77024, telephone (713) 680-1601.

If you try a spa vacation, you may well develop a feeling of both physical well-being and mental relaxation; come away with a new sense of respect for the fitness level of other guests of all ages—and, if you select a destination with racquetball courts, combine your love for the game with a program of good diet and exercise that will have beneficial effects long after you've hit the last ceiling or kill shot. ●

Victor Block is a free-lance travel writer for newspapers, newsletters and magazines; a state editor for Fodor's Guidebooks, and a member of the Society of American Travel Writers. When not on the go researching travel articles, he lives in Washington, DC.

Readers are encouraged to send your racquetball travel questions to Victor Block, c/o National Racquetball, 4350 DiPaolo Center/Dearlove Road, Glenview, IL 60025.

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Tournament Results

Vantrease/Obremski Predicted Win

National Doubles Title Delivered As Promised!

by Chuck Leve

They talked about it in Houston at the National Singles last May—how they were tired of being the better half of “just” good doubles teams. They both wanted to be part of the best team, the national championship team. They both wanted a berth on the U.S. National Team.

“Whadya think? Wanna play doubles together in the Nationals?”

They are Kelvin Vantrease, 24, an ox of a man from Dayton, OH and Dan Obremski, 21, he of lightning quickness of hands and feet, from Pittsburgh, PA. They are, the world should know, the newly crowned 1984 U.S. National Doubles Champions and (now) the newest members of the U.S. Team which traveled to Quito, Ecuador in December.

Their victory in the Men's Open division didn't come easily for a variety of reasons. First, they played unseeded out of the top bracket which meant a trip to the finals would surely be road-blocked by two-time and defending champions Stan Wright and Steve Trent.

Second, while they came into the Nationals undefeated as a team (in fact, they'd never lost a game), they had only appeared as partners in two previous tournaments. The competition would be different, much different, at the Nationals.

Wonderfully hosted by Bob Petersen's Court House in Boise, ID, the tournament compensated for the lighter-than-hoped-for turnout by eastern teams by providing what had to be world's record hospitality. The food and beer (Miller Lite, of course) flowed freely during the week, from the beginning of the opening round to the end of the tournament's exciting, final match.

Sponsored by Diversified Products, Lite Beer from Miller, Wilson Sporting Goods and a host of local firms, the tournament featured 180 teams in 15 divisions of play, crowning national champion teams in each.

In the Men's Open finals, Vantrease/Obremski scratched and clawed and fought and battled their way to a thrilling 15-8, 7-15, 11-7 win over Andy Roberts and Scot Reid, students at Memphis State University, where Roberts captured the national inter-collegiate singles title.

The match was unusual in that each game was so markedly different from any of the others that they each seemed like separate matches. As usual, much was decided on the left side of the court where Vantrease, the linebacker lookalike and Roberts, nearly the same size, set up camp.

(Both left side players are right handed — when was the last time the finals of the National Doubles didn't have a lefty on the court?)

Kelvin absolutely dominated the left side in game one. His blasting backhand corner kills coupled with hard drives down the left wall kept Roberts effectively out of the match. Obremski and Reid basically played the right even, Obremski's hustle and front court coverage matching Reid's right corner kills.

The men from Memphis started slowly, skipping their first four shots, resulting in an 8-3 deficit before Roberts hit his first kill. They came back to 7-8 on two Reid kills, a forehand V-pass left by Reid and Roberts belated entry, an overhead left corner kill.

But in the very next inning, Vantrease/Obremski ran off four points, held Roberts/Reid to one on their serve, and ran out of the game on a Vantrease off-the-back wall dump kill, an Obremski backhand, hypotenuse back wall kill into the left corner (*“the luckiest shot I ever saw,”* said Reid) and Vantrease's backhand left corner kill in front of Reid, who dove but didn't come up with it.

“We had a game plan to play Reid on the right,” said Obremski, *“just like we played Trent in the semi's. But Scot played tough and it turned out that we scored most of our points on the left.”*

While Roberts may not have been a factor in game one, he was the factor in game two, showing how one player

Dan Obremski and Kelvin Vantrease, national doubles champions, Men's Open Division.



can nearly dominate a doubles match if his hot shooting is structured within the doubles concept. But the game didn't start that way.

The teams jostled and maneuvered to 5-all, when at 6-5 Roberts/Reid leading Vantrease ripped a forehand overhead toward the right front corner, which hit Roberts square in the back of the skull. Andy went down and stayed down, in obvious pain, initiating an injury time out.

“It's funny,” said Reid, *“but Andy just wasn't into it at first. I tried everything to pump him up. And then he got hit. Don't take this the wrong way, but I'm glad it happened.”*

After seven injury minutes play resumed and Andy Roberts was a different player. He began tearing up the left side—and much of the right—showing the aggressiveness and power kills for which he's so well known. He began to dominate the court and certainly he dominated a tentative Vantrease on the left.

Roberts/Reid extended their lead to 8-5, 11-7, held Vantrease/Obremski scoreless at 7-13 and rode two Roberts passes, one forehand down the right line and one backhand cross court left to seal the win 15-7.

Did hitting Roberts have an affect on Vantrease?

Silver medalist, Men's Open Division, Scott Reid and Andy Roberts.



"I'd hate to think so," said Kelvin. "I should be able to overcome something like that."

So on to the tie-breaker with spectators (and players) wondering which of the left side's real players would emerge, the lions or the lambs?

The third game was actually closer to two elks butting heads. Vantrease regained his intensity, but Roberts maintained his. Vantrease/Obremski grabbed an early 6-2 advantage but the Memphis State duo came rushing back with four straight on a blistering flurry of kills. Roberts connected to end three consecutive rallies (overhead kill left corner from 38 feet, forehand fly kill into the left corner, and forehand right corner kill from deep on the right side) followed by Reid's forehand right corner kill.

There the scoring stopped for 12 straight rallies, rather incredible for doubles. Neither Vantrease nor Roberts on the left could hit the front wall while Reid kept his team going by hitting the right corner. When Kelvin broke the tie with a forehand V-pass to the right, Roberts answered with a cracked kill left; when Vantrease put one down with a backhand kill of a garbage serve, Andy tied the match with a backhand kill into the left corner.

Vantrease regained the lead, shooting in front of Roberts into the left corner, 8-7 and followed with an ace cracking the serve behind the short line to the right, 9-7. Reid answered with a pass cross court left when Kelvin tried the same serve again.

The critical flurry of the match was next with Roberts/Reid serving, down 7-9 in this 11 point game. Obremski (remember him?) hit the most crucial shot of the match, putting one server down with an overhead cross court kill into the left corner, a gutsy shot, to say the least. When Roberts followed by skipping a backhand set up into the left corner, you could sense that the Memphians would never see the serve again. They didn't.

But the end wasn't quite so near, delayed by the most amazing turn of events involving referee, linesmen, and some heads-up thinking by players of both teams.

When Reid skipped a back wall set up, it appeared the score had just gone to 10-7, but Scot appealed a foot fault that hadn't been called and got the rally replayed when the linesmen upheld his appeal. Scot showed his appreciation by killing a backhand on the very next rally.

But Obremski turned the tables on Reid, appealing his own foot fault that wasn't called. When the linesmen agreed that Obremski *had* foot faulted, the rally was replayed, wiping out Reid's kill. Touche!

Obremski hit the next winner, without foot fault, by taking an off the back wall shot and ripping it into a defenseless Reid who was no more than five or six feet off the front wall. Obremski then served a match-winning ace on a drive right, but a screen call voided that. Reid took advantage and pinched a right to left kill for one down, 10-7.

Vantrease took the serve and reverted back to sound singles strategy to wrap up the title by serving a hard Z to Roberts backhand. When Andy went for bottom board and left it up, Kelvin buried his own backhand re-kill into the left corner and the new champs were duly crowned.

"We're elated! Couldn't be happier," said the winners. "Roberts and Reid were a lot tougher than we thought they'd be. It was a great match."

"I feel like I let my teammate down," said a dejected Roberts later. "I wanted to win it badly, but I didn't come up with the shots when I needed to."

In the semi-finals Vantrease/Obremski blew away Wright/Trent in a match shocking because of the big scores, 15-7, 15-9. It was a match that the defending champs never go into.

"We were just outplayed," said Wright. "They came in and took it to us."

Actually Wright/Trent helped out a great deal by skipping numerous serves. Stan was continually outplayed on the left as Vantrease's power kills to the left corner and hard V-passes right were instrumental in their win.

Another key to the victory was the excellent wide V drive serves by Obremski serves that hit near Vantrease and caromed into center court, forcing either Wright or Trent to return with their backhand. While they did return (when they didn't go for the kills) they didn't return effectively enough with steady Dan covering the front and the powerful, yet disciplined Kelvin supplying the left side fireworks.

Game two found the challengers coming out with a highly-confident, fired up intensity met by the champs cool, unshakable concentration. The confidence of Vantrease/Obremski turned out to be well-founded as they broke from a 9-all deadlock to run out the string.

Three quick points made it 12-9 when a time out for Wright/Trent only made for further intensity on the part of Vantrease/Obremski.

"We'd seen them do that before," said Kelvin. "They take a time out, leave the court and talk it over, come back in and run off 10 points before you can figure it out. We had to make sure that didn't happen."

Despite Obremski skipping his forehand on the next rally, Wright/Trent were unable to dent the scoreboard and Vantrease/Obremski quickly ended the match, 15-9.

Roberts and Reid, meanwhile, were having a heckuva time with the Florida tandem of 40-year-old Joe Icaza and 23-year-old partner Sergio Gonzalez. Icaza, a stocky lefty who relies on control and finesse in the front court shows any combination of fly dump kills, pinches and reverse pinches both forehand and backhand. Gonzalez just hits and hits on the right.

The slow left side pace coupled with the fast right side pace can make this team awfully tough to play. And that's what Roberts/Reid found out in this 15-10, 9-15, 11-5 win.

"That guy on the left (Icaza) is amazing," said Reid. "He's got great touch."

After their first game win, it appeared the Memphis State team got a bit flustered as the Floridians took an 8-7

lead to 14-7. Despite two points in answering, Roberts/Reid were unable to mount a run and Icaza sent the match to the tie-breaker with a soft corner kill to the left with his forehand, 14-9.

The tie-breaker was all Roberts/Reid. Keeping the hard-hitting Gonzalez at bay ("when he gets hot anything can happen") they kept the pressure on by driving the ball left, rolling up a 10-3 lead and holding on 11-5.

In the quarters Wright/Trent stopped Doug Zirkle/Mark Hegg 15-11, 15-7. Van-trease/Obremski eliminated Bubba Gautier/Tim Hanson in what Obremski termed "our toughest match of the tournament." The winners had to come back from a 9-3 tie-breaker deficit to win 12-15, 15-12, 11-9.

In the lower bracket Roberts/Reid stopped second seeds Jeff Kwartler/Mark Malowitz convincingly 15-7, 15-8 while Icaza/Gonzalez eliminated Cliff Swain/Don Costeleich 12-15, 15-9, 11-9.

Florida Finale Finds Frantic Pace In Women's Open

It was one of those matches that was closer than it had to be. But the closer it got the more difficult it became for either team to draw away. As a result, the Women's Open finals match at the National Doubles was a high-pitched, frenetic-paced, all-out war between two teams that know each other well.

Both finalists hail from Florida, with newly crowned champs Diane Bullard on the left and Julie Pinnell on the right. Their opponents were Mary Lyons and Susie Morgan, who had beaten them in the Women's 25+ division early in the tournament.

But that was Friday and this was Sunday. That was for a medal, this was for not only the national title, but also a spot on the U.S. National Team. This was, as they say, for all the marbles.

"We talked about it after we lost to them in the 25's," said Pinnell. "We told each other that if we had to lose to them, it was better to lose there than in the Open. We wanted to make the U.S. Team and that meant we had to win the Open."

The match, which eventually was won by Bullard/Pinnell 15-5, 14-15, 11-10, was every bit as close as the scores indicate. But it sure didn't start out that way.

With Bullard dominating the court, she and Pinnell took a 6-4 early lead to 14-4, blowing the game wide open with blistering kills on the backhand by Bullard and the forehand by Pinnell. Lyons, on the left, didn't kill a ball the entire game, while Morgan wasn't much better. To the untrained eye, this match appeared to be a mis-match.

Lyons/Morgan came out for game two with Morgan on the left more than in game one where the tandem switched sides on each of their second serves. In the first few rallies, nothing seemed to have changed as Lyons skipped two shots and Bullard's cool, calm and confident appearance seemed to doom the opponents.

But much to her credit, Mary Lyons hung in there, and sure enough, her shots came back to her. After all, you don't go to the national finals without the shots. With her team hanging in there to 7-7, two straight Lyons kills (one forehand, one backhand—both from the right side) took her team to a short-lived 10-7 advantage. But in this game, advantages were all short-lived.

Bullard/Pinnell came back not only to tie at 10-all, but they continued on what appeared to be a relentless march to the title. A Lyons skip off the back wall made it 11-10, a Bullard overhead pass down the right line was 12-10, a Bullard ace to the right was 13-10, and Diane finished her blaze of glory with a backhand, back wall pinch kill left to right 14-10.

But the fat lady had yet to sing. In an incredible show of gutsiness, Lyons/Morgan refused to give in. Mary hit a forehand back wall kill to regain the serve and the Jacksonville, FL tandem put together their own string of points. Bullard skipped a deep court kill attempt making it 11-14, Lyons hit an ace on the crack to the right for 12-14 and she followed with two passes (the first down the left line, the second down the right) to tie the score at 14.

But Bullard took charge once more, killing a forehand from deep court to make it one down, and connecting on a forehand V-pass to the right to regain the serve. But they were unable to dent the scoreboard, and in top-flight doubles you must get your points when the opportunities present themselves. Lyons forehand pass right and Morgan's forehand pinch kill right put out Bullard/Pinnell and set the stage for victory.

It didn't take long either. After Pinnell forehand V-pass right put one down, Lyons took charge and hit a backhand fly kill straight in from the right to send the match to the tie-breaker, 15-14.



"We were kicking ourselves for letting the second game get away from us," said Pinnell. "But we knew we had to come back strong in the third."

Like the second game, the tie-breaker was tight all the way through. There were ties at two, four, eight, nine and 10, so domination was not a word spoken to describe the goings on.

The biggest lead of the game was at 8-4 for Lyons/Morgan, a lead generated almost exclusively on Lyons red-hot shooting—she connected on her first four kill attempts in the tie-breaker. But it was Pinnell, who quietly had played a consistent right side for an hour and a-half, who hit two key winners to bring her team back.

At 4-8 Bullard killed a forehand to make it 5-8, and Pinnell followed with two consecutive passing winners to the left, 7-8. When Lyons skipped a set up in center court the match was tied at 8. Pinnell hit another passing winner to grab the next lead, 9-8, but Lyons answered with her own down-the-line pass right to tie the match at 9, as the gallery squealed with anguish or delight on every rally.

The drama continued to unfold as the fans wondered who would fold under the intense pressure as all of those marbles were now down to a two point match, Bullard got her team to within one of the promised land when she hit a forehand kill into the left corner from center court, 10-9; but Morgan hit a great forehand pass down the right line to tie it at 10, with both serves left, as dominant a position as you'll ever find.

But this was not to be their match, Lyons/Morgan that is. And the heroine

was Julia Pinnell who hit three consecutive winners to stop her opponents and put herself on the U.S. National Team. A forehand pass down the right line put one down; a V-pass left was the side out; and after a Lyons/Morgan time out did nothing but postpone the execution, Pinnell hit another winning V-pass to the left, this time winning the National title, 11-10.

"We were fortunate to win," said Bullard in the understatement of the year. "We've beaten them before, but we sure didn't play like it."

Neither team had an easy time of it in the semi-finals. Lyons/Morgan had the distinction of taking out the top-seeded duo of Malia Kamahoahoa/Carol Frenck in a solidly played 15-12, 12-15, 11-2 match. In the lower bracket, second seeded Bullard/Pinnell had about the same degree of trouble with Mona Mook/Trina Rasmussen 15-13, 11-15, 11-6.

All of the seeded teams reached the quarters where Kamahoahoa/Frenck stopped Michelle Gilman/Ann Anderson 15-13, 15-12; Lyons/Morgan eliminated Marci Drexler/Theresa Nunn 15-14, 15-12; Mook/Rasmussen defeated Cindy Baxter/Kathy Gluva by the weird scores of 2-15, 15-9, 11-0; and Bullard/Pinnell did away with local favorites Sheryl Ambler/Elaine Riley 15-4, 15-11.

Mixed Manages To Make The Big Time — Finally!

Maybe it was the unusual circumstances surrounding the match. Maybe it was the dynamic, gutsy play of the women. Maybe it was merely that the time had come to recognize mixed doubles as Mixed Doubles. Whatever it was, Kelvin Vantrease/Malia Kamahoahoa and Dan Obremski/Cindy Baxter put on an exhibition of fantastic doubles, for any age category or gender.

But there were unusual circumstances, beginning with the fact that Obremski and Vantrease, partners in the Open division, where they eventually won the title, were forced to play against each other in the Mixed Open final, basically assuring them no more than 90 minutes rest prior to their all-important Open championship match.

Besides that there was the oddity of Obremski, who played right side with Vantrease en route to the title, but played left side with Baxter en route to their near win in the Mixed. Nobody could recall any previous case where a player was a finalist in the events and played the opposite side in each.

"We were going to ask Luke (AARA executive director and tournament director Luke St. Onge) if we could just not play the Mixed final," said Vantrease. "We would have gladly given the women the gold medals and we'd have taken the silver."

But the ladies wanted to play, so a "gentleman's agreement" was struck by the men: if anybody got a big lead, let them have the game, but at all costs save ourselves for the Open Final. Ah, but so much for the best laid plans.

"Something happened to us when we got on court," said Obremski, who rallied his team from an 11-1 deficit to pull out game one 15-14. "We're just not the kind of players who can give in. When the bell rings we come to play."

Thus the match that most observers expected to be a bore, turned out to be one of the toughest, dog-eat-dog battles of the entire tournament, finally captured by Vantrease/Kamahoahoa 14-15, 15-10, 11-10. And yes, there were the two partners, eventually to be crowned National Champion partners, fighting each other on the left side, jostling for position, pushing for room and generally treating each other like, well, opponents.

On the right, Kamahoahoa's quiet steadiness and Baxter's amazing quickness seemed to balance the match. And let it be said early: there was no easing up in this match. None.

"Hell, I tried all day to rip 'em past Cindy on the right," said Vantrease who had no trouble ripping 'em past the likes of Steve Trent and Scot Reid. "But she was just too quick. I couldn't get the ball past her."

In game two, Vantrease/Kamahoahoa took their early lead as they did in game one, but this time they held on to force the tie-breaker, which was a great one.

There was little question that Vantrease was the dominant player on the court, but part of that was his tendency to poach balls that would have been easier for Malia to handle. Obremski, seemingly more comfortable with his partner, gave Baxter all the leeway she wanted.

The tie-breaker found Obremski/Baxter taking a 6-all tie to 10-6 on the strength of two Baxter kills and two Vantrease skips. But Kelvin, whose inconsistency is probably his biggest nemesis, got hot at the right time and just in time for a forehand kill to regain the serve.

Coming in at 6-10 Vantrease hit two straight kills to make it 8-10, but Baxter and Obremski hit their own kills and regained the serve on the verge of victory. They called time out at this juncture, to plan their victory celebration, one would guess. A celebration, we know, that never came.

First Vantrease hit a backhand reverse pinch kill into the left corner. Then Malia connected on a pass down the right line and just like that they had the serve back. While Baxter's right corner kill put one down, her unforced ceiling error on the next rally gave Kelvin/Malia their ninth point. But showing the courage that has marked her career, Baxter coolly hit a forehand kill in front of Malia on the right to regain the serve at 10-9.

But it wasn't in the cards for Obremski/Baxter. Dan went for the match winner and came up short as he skipped a forehand off the back wall. Vantrease then regained the serve by hitting a pressure-packed backhand splat kill from deep court.

Kelvin then took control and in so doing took the match. At 9-10 he hit another backhand winner into the left corner, 10-10; and on the next rally he ended the match with a forehand pass down the left line that eluded the diving Obremski.

It was a match that made many players start to re-think their blasé attitude toward mixed doubles. One player, Open runner-up Reid stated flatly that he intended to return next year in the Mixed. A new dawn, it appears, is on the horizon.

In the semi-finals, Baxter/Obremski stopped the Memphis team of Larry Liles and Kathy Gluva 15-10, 15-3, while Vantrease/Kamahoahoa eliminated Sheryl Ambler and Joe Scott 15-13, 15-5.

Three Game Finals Highlight Men's 25 + Categories

Tie-breakers were the names of the games in three of the four under 45 age categories, as no team was able to win more than one event, although many tried. The battles raged fiercely in almost every division of play.

In the 25+ division, the team of Dan Factor and Marshall Greenman rose to the top despite the best efforts of Gary Mazzaroff and Jim Owen 14-15, 15-11, 11-3. In the semi-finals the winners topped Jay McGurran/Chip Lien 15-9, 15-11, while Mazzaroff/Owen eliminated Bob Kraut/Bob Baruch in a well-played 15-5, 13-5, 11-5 battle.

In the 30± category, Rob Baruck and Steve Dunn captured the gold medals, upsetting top seeds Mark Morrow/Bruce Radford 15-14, 5-15, 11-3 for the title. The winners had an even more difficult time of it in the semi-finals, holding on to stop second seeds Bob Kraut/Gene Gibbs 15-11, 13-15, 11-9.

Morrow/Radford, who barely got out of the second round, had no trouble in their semi-final encounter, 15-8, 15-9 over Dan Allen/John Lockridge.

Joe Icaza, who came within an eyelash of playing in two finals three divisions apart, captured the national title in the 35+ with partner Van Dubolsky—but it was no picnic.

Icaza/Dubolsky were forced to three games twice, once in the finals where they managed a 15-11, 14-15, 11-5 victory over the tough team of former pro Bill Thurman and partner Eric Barkley. The other three games the champs endured was in the semi-finals against Bill Dunn/Joe Sullivan, a match that went as far as they go before Icaza/Dubolsky emerged winners 15-4, 10-15, 11-10.

Thurman/Barkley, after a close call in the quarters, breezed in their semi-finals actions 15-6, 15-5 against Price Thomas and Henry Lopez.

In the Men's 40+ two former pros teamed up as the top seeds but were unable to capture the title. Jim Austin and Bill Schmidtke, both legends in racquetball's short history, got clobbered in the finals by two legends in their own right, Mark Wayne and Jerry Davis.

Wayne/Davis not only won this division, they never lost a game. In fact, no team was able to even score double figures against them, so complete was their domination. Austin/Schmidtke were equally impressive enroute to the finals, winning their semi-finals match 15-9, 15-6 against Joe Early/Tom Morrow.

Wayne/Davis did their usual number on Harold Serafin/Ken Seamans in the semi's 15-8, 15-5.

Talent Abounds In Women's Age Categories

Providing that quality is as good as quantity, 15 teams competed in three divisions in women's age categories of 25+ 30+, and 35+ at the National Doubles Championships.

As reported earlier, the Women's Open finalists were paired against each other in the first round of the Women's 25+ round robin tournament, won by Mary Lyons/Susan Morgan, 4-15, 15-13, 11-8. The Lyons/Morgan duo went undefeated in the four-team event.

In the Women's 30+, Carol Frenck and Vicki Bone teamed up to capture the gold medals, stopping Theresa Silva and Barb Smith in the championship match 15-6, 15-5.

In the Women's 35+, five teams vied for the crown, captured in thrilling fashion by Suzie Bates and Barb Smith 15-13, 9-15, 11-9 over Mimi Kelly/Vicki Edelman. Neither team had any trouble en route to the finals.

Muehleisen/Colombo Dominate Older Age Categories

Proving that they are easily the best of their era, Bud Muehleisen and Pat Colombo rolled through both the Men's 45+ and 50+ divisions of play without losing a game to take home two more national titles, to what must be two of the most crowded trophy cases in America.

In the 45's, oddly, their final match was a real no contest, as they San Diego/Rochester, NY tandem blew away New Jersey's Pete Talbot and his partner, Pennsylvania's Joe Jackman, 15-4, 15-2. In the 50+ division, where you would think the added age factor would make things even easier for them, Bud/Pat were taken to the brink twice pulling out 15-14 wins.

In the Men's 45+ semi-finals Muehleisen/Colombo stopped Don Alt/Ken Randazzo 15-6, 15-11, while Talbot-Jackman, playing much more relaxed and effectively stopped Tom Morrow/Ken Seamans 15-14, 15-11.

In the 50's Muehleisen/Colombo wrestled the gold medal from Gene Grapes/Al Schattner 15-14, 15-7. Grapes, playing on his transplanted hip, still has all the shots, and Schattner plays the left every bit as well. In fact, this team may hold the record for longest partnership duration, well over 15 years.

But the longevity didn't help all that much against the relentless power of southpaw Muehleisen on the left and Colombo's quickness and forehand corner kills on the right.

In the semi-finals Bud/Pat stopped Talbot/Otis Chapman 15-14, 15-9, in a well-played, tough doubles battle. The lower bracket semi found Grapes/Schattner defeating Harvey Clar/A1 Rossi 14-15, 15-14, 11-9 in one of the tournament's best matches.

In the 55+ division, the Canadian tandem of Pat Whitehall and Duncan Stockwell were the surprise winners, eliminating top seeds Don Erickson/Ivan Bruner in rather rude fashion in the finals, 15-6, 15-3.

Whitehall/Stockwell also took care of second seeds Scotty Deeds/David Hughes in the semi-finals 15-4, 15-9, a convincing tournament for sure by the Canadians. In their semi-final encounter, Erickson/Bruner did away with Harold Cibak/Lake Westphal 15-3, 15-9.

Gumer/Shepherd Capture 'Mummy' Divisions

They call them the "Mummy" divisions because they players are so wrapped up that they look like mummies. Yet there was Louisville's Ike Gumer and partner Alan Shepherd, with nary a wrap as they forged their names into the gold medals at the National Doubles.

Well, actually that's a bit of a fib. Gumer was wearing a brace just above the knee, but it didn't really qualify as a wrap. In any event, Gumer/Shepherd not only won the Men's 60+ division, they also won the Men's 65+, which makes them the Muehleisen/Colombo of their categories.

In the 60+, Gumer/Shepherd stopped old foes Luzelle Wilde and Earl Acuff in the finals. Lake Westphal/Harold Cibak captured third place.

In the 65+, Herman DeVault/Ed Lohr, the Portland duo, gave Gumer/Shepherd a run for their money, before succumbing in the finals. Wilde/Acuff took third in this division.

And while the older guys don't get the large galleries or the glass courts, and probably not the recognition they deserve, their brand of racquetball is classic in that it represents racquetball the way it was meant to be played. No splat shots here; not super power games here. Just good, solid, fundamentally sound racquetball.

More power to them.

Luke St. Onge, tournament director and AARA executive director, confers with Pat Gerrity, floor manager. Once again, Gerrity did a remarkable job of running the show.



NOTES OF THE TOURNAMENT...

Club owners who are players always run the best tournaments and Bob Petersen continues to outdo himself each time he's host to any event, let alone a national tournament. The Court House personnel are pleasant, eager-to-help individuals who make out-of-townners feel welcome....Representatives from major sponsoring companies who took in much of the action included Miller Lite's Bob Bertini, DP's Reid Roney, Sports Unlimited's Kent Taylor, and Ketchum Advertising's Judi Martin (on behalf of Miller)...Site to behold was the match between Bertini and AARA vice president Al Seitelman, played on a back court during a prime match, when nobody else was watching. To spare embarrassment, we won't divulge any scores...Some things never change department: time outs to wipe up the floor still needlessly interrupt matches, dragging them unnecessarily longer...Great lines, Part I: Bill Thurman, after getting ripped in the thigh with a blistering backhand, looking around blankly: *"Is there a mosquito in here?"*...Red Lion Inn, headquarters hotel, was beautiful. Nice rooms, good service, super location....Annual ban-

quet was (again) highlighted by the Jim Hiser slide presentation, always a hit, and this time even more incredible due to the difficult technical problems (not of his doing) that Jim had to overcome...Great to see the guys who've stuck with the game for so many years like Grapes, Schattner, Gumer, Wilde, Colombo, Muehleisen, Austin, Dunn and Dunn, Thurman, Morrow, Radford, Talbot, Erickson, Bruner and so many others...Things Never Change Department, Part II: Linesman still drink beer while on duty. This should be stopped. Terrible image. Faulty judgment that could destroy match integrity...Great Lines, Part II: *"Isn't this the greatest!"*—Luke St. Onge...Mark Wentura and Steve Strandemo, representing AMF-Head, on hand to help out their players, and discussing state of the industry with the powers that be...Things Never Change Department, Part III: Steve Keeley, on hand to watch, ref,

and be around, discussing plans to write his book on his life as a hobo, then take off for Africa...Pat Gerrity and his crew doing their usual outstanding job at the floor manager's desk. A good floor manager can make a tournament, and Pat's better than good....Things Never Change Department, Part IV: Over the P.A. from floor manager's desk, *"We could use some refs, please."*...Paul Henrikson did his usual fine job m.c.ing the banquet as well as helping to explain the lack of northeastern entries due to unavailability of cut-rate air fares that had been expected...Only in doubles will you see partners clanging racquets together as a pick-me-up. What an annoying habit...One of a kind: Mary Lyon's pink strings. How did she do that?...There's not a racquetball player alive who can touch Eric Barkley on the dance. He's in a class by himself...There's a definite trend in the industry for billboarded court walls during major tournaments. Pretty soon we won't be able to see the ball because of all the logos. So what? We need the sponsors...Nobody asked but 15 point games is perfect for doubles, much better than 21 pointers. The 15-15-11 format was excellent and should be used in all doubles events...Cheyenne, WHY?-oming announced as next year's site for National Doubles. Nobody said a word—shock, I guess. ●

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Tournament Results

Hogan Takes Bud Light Open



"There's a lot of young players out there like Scott (Oliver) who are going to change the men's pro seeding," Marty Hogan said after the match. "It isn't going to be the standard top four players winning it all, like we're used to seeing. These guys are getting too tough."

With his \$4,000 first place check in hand, after winning the Bud Light Open at the Davison (MI) Racquet Club, August 23-26, Hogan saluted the younger players who made their mark at the first prize-winning tournament of the season.

Hogan stopped one of the rising stars in the finals at Davison - Scott Oliver, the 21-year-old Stockton, Californian who surprised everyone with his enduring, aggressive performance during the week-long tournament.

Davison hosted its seventh pro/am event, run annually by Jim Hiser. Sixty-one players entered the men's pro division in the tournament which, although not especially noted for its big purse, is a favorite of the seasoned veterans.

This year Hiser announced that the loser of the match would have to referee a subsequent match. This system worked remarkably well, with few complaints from refs, players, or spectators.

The first of the tournament's surprises came after all top eight seeds made it through the round of 32.

Mike Yellen entered the 16's after eliminating Michigan's Chuck Teets, ready to face Corey Brysman, the 21-year-old former Floridian. Wear and tear from the summer months and lack of conditioning did Yellen in, with Brysman winning an incredible match, 11-9, 10-11, 11-10, 9-11, 11-9.

Other noteworthy upper bracket division play included the match between Cliff Swain, Braintree, MA, and Jack Newman, Chicago. Swain, former junior champ bested the rising young Illinois pro, but could do little harm against Ruben Gonzalez in their round of 16 match. Gonzalez took that 11-10, 7-11, 11-10, 2-11, 11-6.

Gerry Price and Oliver, seeded eighth and ninth, faced off late Friday night. It appeared that Price was in control through the early position of the match, but Oliver took over, winning 2-11, 7-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-8. Another good match in the 16's was Dave Peck's 7-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-6 win over Doug Cohen.

In the quarter-finals Peck then faced Ruben Gonzalez, continuing his mastery over the New Yorker 11-6, 11-4, 11-0. Peck can read Gonzalez's game obviously, but Ruben evidently has troubles figuring out Peck's! Their last contests have all had the same results.

Oliver faced Brysman in his quarter-final match, eliminating Corey 11-6, 7-11, 11-6, 11-9 before going on to his semi-final battle against Gregg Peck. Unfortunately, all quarter and semi-final matches were scheduled for the same day (Saturday) and some players went into their semi-final match with little rest in between. This was the case when Oliver faced Peck.

Although the Brysman/Oliver match was no piece of cake, Peck's match against Bret Harnett was brutal with Peck victorious, 11-10, 11-8, 11-10.

Peck's victory took its toll when he faced Oliver less than three hours later. The usual Peck aggressiveness was lacking and he lost in four, 11-6, 2-11, 11-8, 11-8.

Lower bracket play had only one real surprise in the round of 32 when Andy Gross and Brian Hawkes faced off. The two hosted the tournament's only blood bath. Outdoor champ Hawkes dove into the right rear corner on a return and came up with a huge cut on the chin. Time was called while former surgical assistant Dave Peck tended to the wound. The injury didn't deter Hawkes who went on to an 11-3, 9-11, 11-6, 11-10 victory before going to an area hospital for stitches.

Unfortunately, Hawkes didn't do as well in the round of 16 as Hogan took that match 11-10, 11-7, 4-11, 11-8. Marty did equally well in his games with Hilecher in the quarters, taking those 11-8, 7-11, 11-1, 11-5, to move steadily towards the finals.

The Hogan/Peck semi-final match started with Marty taking the first two games 11-8, 11-9. Hogan then reverted to a problem that has plagued his entire career—easing up when well ahead—and Peck took the next two games handily as a result, 7-11, 5-11. Hogan regrouped and regained his determination to win the fifth and deciding game 11-7.

When Sunday's final match began, spectators who filled the glass court bleachers couldn't help but wonder if the kid who'd done so well all week—Scott Oliver—would continue his good fortune and top the champ. Hogan, perhaps wondering the same, won the first game utilizing all the methods of a champion, taking a 5-1 lead right away and riding four aces to an 11-9 win.

Oliver rallied to win the second game, 11-2, and took an early lead in the third game, 3-2. Hogan, however, came back strong, winning the third and fourth games, 11-5, 11-4, and the \$4,000 first place check. ●

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