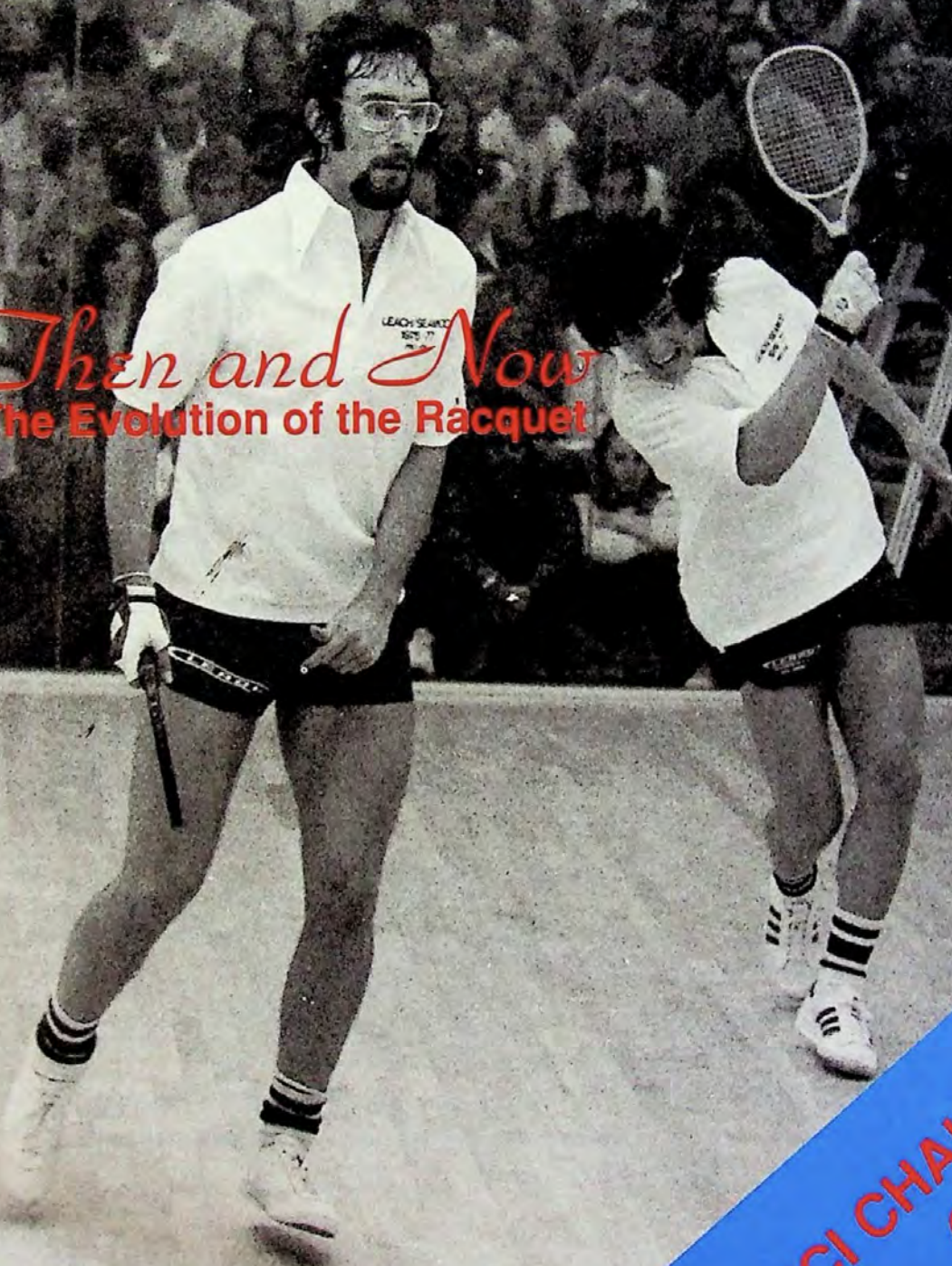


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Summer 1993
Volume III, Number 3



It's summer, so in most parts of the country, that means few tournaments. What a great time to hone your skills for the coming season. The best teachers in the game show you how in four great instructional features! **Page 10** *Advanced Stroke Mechanics; Do it Like the Pros Do* by Aaron Katz.

Cliff Swain continues to dominate the TransCoastal IRT and the VCI Cup Series. The IRT made three recent stops of constant action. **Page 17** *Hold on to Your Lederhosen.*

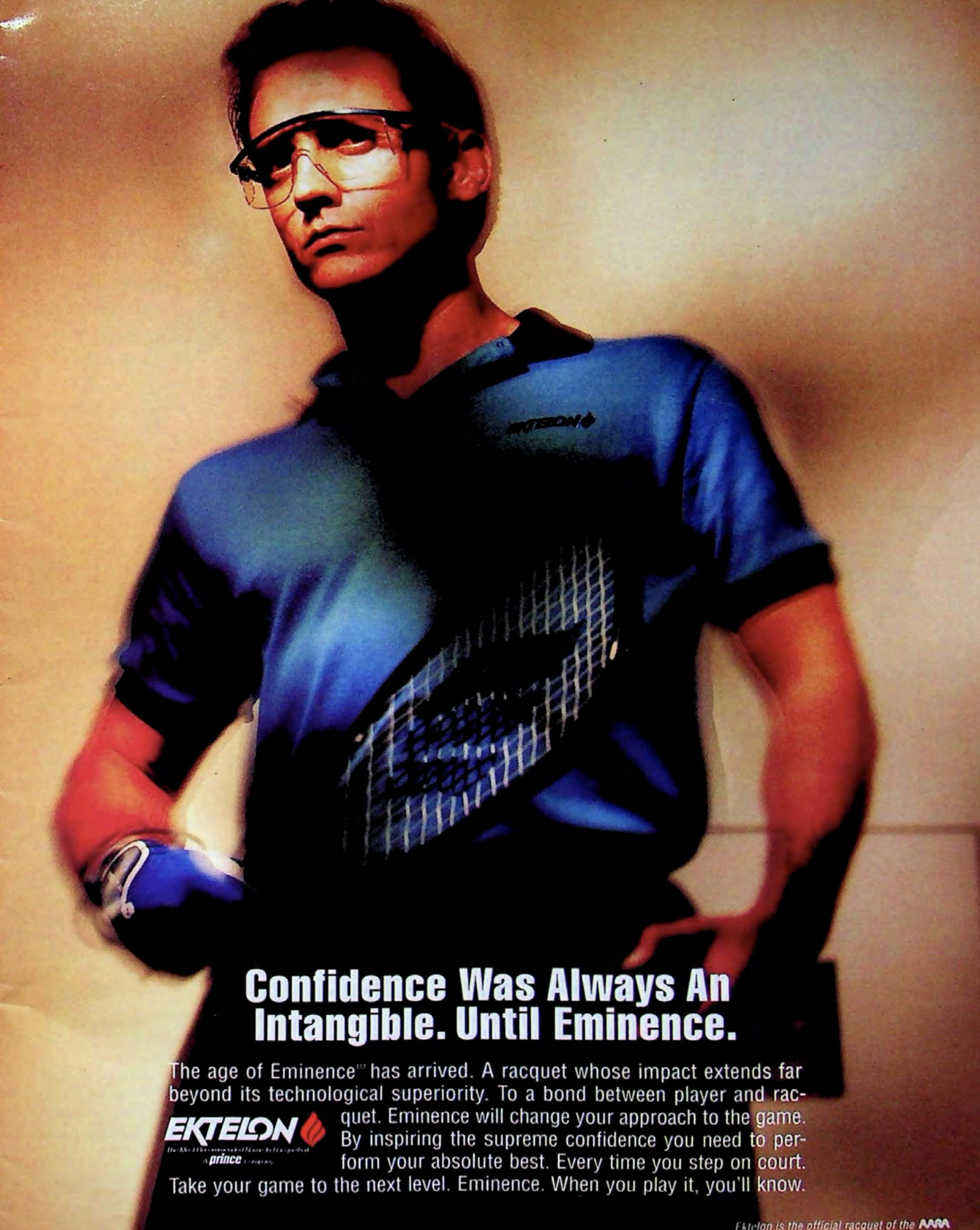


Racquet frames have come a long way! In the year that is the twentieth anniversary of professional racquetball and the twenty-fifth anniversary of organized amateur racquetball, it seems only fitting to take a look back through the past at what was "state of the art" **Page 41** *Darwinian Racquetball; The Evolution of the Racquet*



Cover photo: Charlie Brumfield & Marty Hogan, 1977 courtesy Pro Kennex

- 4 Short Serves
- 6 Climbing the Walls
- 9 Editorial
 - Wow! Look What I Found
- 10 Do It Like the Pros Do
 - Advanced Stroke Mechanics
- 12 America's Most Wanted Racquetball
 - Three of the Best at What They Do Best
- 17 IRT Tour
 - Hold on to Your Lederhosen
- 24 Rankings
 - VCI Spreadsheet
- 26 WPRA Tour
 - Solid Gould
- 30 What's All the RAK IT About?
- 32 IRT News
 - The Names Behind the Scenes
- 33 No Strings Attached? (Part II)
- 34 Dynamic Duo
 - Court Position
- 36 Strandemo on Racquetball
 - Gearing Up for Camp
- 38 Summer Camp
- 40 WPRA News
 - Growth Spurt in the WPRA
- 41 Darwinian Racquetball
- 46 Tennis Elbow Revisited



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SHORT SERVES

Back With a Vengeance

Egan Inoue, one of the hardest hitting pros on the IRT, is back from an early retirement and playing with the intensity and fire of his best days on the tour.

A knee injury in 1992 forced Inoue into an early retirement from the tour earlier this year. But the knee improved greatly and Inoue made his first re-appearance at the VCI event in Atlanta in the **BI RAK IT** competition.



Harripersad Suspended

Canadian National Team member Roger Harripersad has been suspended from amateur competition for testing positive for anabolic steroids earlier this year. Harripersad has been suspended from the Canadian team for four years. The International Racquetball Federation, the international governing body, imposed only a two year suspension, but will prevent Harripersad from competing for four years since part of the international rules say that a player must be in good standing in his home country to compete. Further, Harripersad will permanently lose his monthly income from Sport Canada which is provided for athletes representing Canada in international competition.

Discussing the suspension Harripersad said, "I explained why I was on the medication, that it was while recovering from an injury, not for performance enhancement. I am willing to take consequences, but four years seems extreme. Part of my motivation in speeding up my recovery from the injury was my pride in international competition. I was not trying to cheat, just to get back to my best. A two year suspension as the IRF gave would have taught a valuable lesson, but four years ends my career. What good is the punishment if I do not have an opportunity to learn from it and bounce back?"

In an official statement from the TransCoastal International Racquetball Tour, Commissioner Hank Marcus described the following guidelines for steroid abuse with the pro players. "On the pro tour, any player testing positive in any testing we impose will be suspended for two years. Any player testing positive in testing by a national amateur body such as in Roger's case, is immediately on probation for two years, must present a current negative test, and may be tested occasionally while on probation. Roger has provided the negative test and will be able to compete in pro events unless another positive test occurs."

David Bell, the new president of Racquetball Canada (not in office at the time of the suspension) said, "It was an unfortunate incident and the suspension is a tough stance that we have to take. Four years is the appropriate suspension but no one here feels good about the situation."

The 28 year old Harripersad is a former National Canadian Juniors Champion, Doubles Champion, and World Intercollegiate Champion. In his first full year back on the men's pro tour Harripersad has already achieved a list of upsets. He is still often recognized for his upset of Marty Hogan in the 1986 U.S. Nationals.



sizzlers

Who's Hot in Racquetball

Cliff Swain --clinging the National Championship (#1 for the season) and the VCI Challenge Cup

Michelle Gould -- unbeatable when 100% healthy

Tim Sweeney --claiming his third consecutive intercollegiate title

Tanya Spangler -- winning her first intercollegiate title

Mike Ray --his first **BI RAK IT** win

Aaron Katz --upsets into the finals at Las Vegas

Mike Guidry --upsetting Roberts and nearly Swain in Memphis

Lynne Coburn -- upsets into the finals at Syracuse

Chris Cole -- bringing home the Cup of the Americas from Bolivia

Jacqueline Paraiso-Gibson -- bringing home the Cup of the Americas from Bolivia

...and returns

"Some fire stations even have racquetball courts downstairs."

"Eric was teaching (he, him) and his sister how to play racquetball."

--English Red Level (Grade 7) McDougal Littell & Co., Evanston, Illinois, © 1988

"The range of readers' participation sports runs the gamut: racquetball, swimming (best equipment: "none"), horseback riding, and soccer all made strong showings;"

--"The Best of the Best 1993" Reader Survey, June 1993 *Robb Report*

Norm Blum's Passing Shots

Racquetball Matures

Racquetball has come of age and you can thank Newsweek magazine. A columnist in the weekly publication discussed the plight of being a single dad with custody of two kids. He's no longer able to kiss-up to the boss when asked to play racquetball at 6:30 a.m. He said not being able to play racquetball could affect his move up the corporate ladder. Five years ago racquetball would never have been mentioned. It was strictly tennis or golf.

Adams Okay

Congratulations to Lynn Adams (Clay) and Rich Clay on the birth of their first child, Kristen Kelly. It wasn't a smooth delivery for Lynn. All is well now, but she was hospitalized three weeks.

"Cheer-ful" Theory

People who run successful racquetball facilities are the ones who adhere to the theme song from "Cheers". They know

their customers when they walk into the club and if the customers go a couple of weeks without playing they place a phone call to find out what's wrong. "I called one player who used to play religiously twice a week and all of a sudden stopped playing," a manager said. "He told me his regular partner for the last five years was transferred and that he didn't have anyone to play with. I arranged for a new partner and he's back playing again and spending money in the pro shop and at the bar."

Potpourri

- Unseeded Aaron Metcalf, who had never won an indoor open tournament, shocked the amateur world when he won the Southeastern Regionals.

- I'm getting more respect as I age. After defeating a player soundly in a league match, he saw me a few days later and said, "Oh, no, there's Freddie Kruger, my worst nightmare."

- It might be the '90's, but men are still having a difficult time when they lose to women. "I can't tell you how many times I've heard 'I lost to you because I didn't try as hard because you are a woman,'" says veteran Mary Lyons.



CLIMBING the WALLS



By Larry Heflin, USTPA Pro 1

Have you ever taken up a sport, like tennis or racquetball with the idea of trying to become the best you can be, only to find that after years of effort, you become frustrated because it seems you are no longer improving?

As a tennis coach and open-level racquetball player for twenty years, I have seen many players reach this critical point. More often than not, the player will give up futile efforts to improve, or completely give up the game. At the very least, that player becomes disenchanted with the sport and no longer regards it with the same drive or excitement.

None of these results are acceptable to me. I believe there is help for players who find themselves in this situation. It comes in the form of education in the proper stages of development. In teaching tennis, racquetball, or any subject, it is important to lay a general foundation before embarking on the specifics. Often, players do not realize the importance of learning the game in an organized fashion. Without reference points or "landmarks" to set up an understandable framework, the player will become lost in a sea of good intentions and misinformation.

Because the sudden halt in improvement feels like running into a brick wall, I like to refer to these stages of development

as "The Walls". My five walls have the names: *Basic Fundamentals*, *Patience & Consistency*, *Styles and Strategies*, *Weapons*, and *Mental Toughness*. I try to teach all of my students (beginners, intermediates, and advanced) that they must climb all of these walls, preferably in order, to be able to continuously improve over the long term.

It is important to say that in actuality, none of us ever make it to the top of these walls. We constantly strive to climb higher and higher, understanding that there is always room for improvement. Realistically, climbing higher on any of these also enhances the need to climb higher on each of the others. With that in mind, it is then clear that the wall which any player neglects most becomes that player's greatest weakness. When we look at another player to find weaknesses on which to capitalize, we are really looking to see which wall that player has ignored or found difficult.

Basic Fundamentals

The wall which I call Basic Fundamentals is the first and most impor-

tant wall to be climbed. Learning basic mechanics (mobility, forehand, backhand, serve, return, drive, lob, pinch, etc.) is a must if you are to continue to improve. Failure to become fundamentally sound in these areas will, without a doubt, cause you to stop improving somewhere down the road.

There is simply no room to argue the point, no player ever succeeded in any sport without a grasp of the fundamentals, period. No matter how fast, how agile, or how bright you are, you will not succeed without a significant command of the fundamentals. If you have slid by until now in these areas, it is probably a good time to get honest and do something about it. Talk to your local pro, find out where you are unsound, and develop a program to improve in those areas.

Patience & Consistency

The second wall that we all must climb is called Patience & Consistency. This is an area that many players underestimate. In my experience, I have never seen a top player that wasn't able to be consistent and patient as the need arose. In any

match, there are always those crucial points that require extra patience and consistency. Any player who has not climbed high on this wall will probably end up losing many matches. The player with good patience and consistency will play matches against better and better opponents without significantly increasing miss-hits, skips, or left-up shots.

To improve at this I recommend finding practice partners that you know are very patient and consistent and work out with them on a regular basis. Your goal during these sessions will be to try and match your partner's consistency. Doing this correctly will allow you to make good use of the fundamentals you have just perfected.

Styles & Strategies

The third wall is that of Styles and Strategies. Once you are confident of your position on walls one and two, it is time for you to give thought and effort to the style of play that best suits your abilities. Once that style is identified, it is time to go about learning the strategies that will enhance your style of play. There are two basic styles of players: control players and power players. At the professional level Mike Ray and Mike Yellen are examples of control players. Egan Inoue and Tim Doyle are two of the premiere power players. Once you settle on a particular style, you must work on strategies that enhance that style. For example, control players need to learn to use off speed shots, ceiling balls or other overheads, and deceptive serves. The power player would need to minimize his shots coming off the back and side walls, hitting into a reasonable front-wall zone to avoid skips, and improve court positioning to take better advantage of rallies.

The bottom line is, to improve you should develop a program that will develop your style of play. Your local pro can be of great help in designing this program. Do not be misled into believing that a good control player does not need or have power, or that a good power player does not need or have good control. The distinction lies in habits and techniques. More

simply put, realize your strong points and build styles and strategies to maximize them.

Weapons

The fourth wall I call Weapons. If you have climbed high on the first three walls, then you are already an accomplished player who can beat a lot of opponents. If you aspire to a higher level, it is time to concentrate on developing some weapons that will allow you to win points rather than simply waiting for your opponents to beat themselves. I have always preached that the greatest weapon a player possesses is his mind. The ability to use your brain to find ways to negate your opponent's strengths and to recognize and take advantage of that player's weaknesses is truly a great weapon. Movement is also a weapon. There is nothing more frustrating to a player than having his best shots run down and returned with authority.

Of course, there are many shots that can be made into weapons. The huge serve, drive forehand and backhand, and deceptive splat are some of the very prominently seen weapons on the pro tour. If you want to advance to the next level, then start to work on the weapon that best suits your game. Again, your local pro can help

you set up specific drills and match play situations designed to improve your weapons. Racquetball differs from tennis or squash in its greater number of possible "winner" shots. That is, racquetball yields tremendous opportunities to aggressively end rallies. Do not mistake this to mean try to roll out every shot! It simply means that in racquetball, you probably have more choices than many other racquet sports for finding an opportunity to hit a clear winner. It is probably that aspect that hooked many of us on the game in the first place.

Mental Toughness

The final wall I discuss with my students is the one I call Mental Toughness. This area has been a real hot subject of late. Sports psychologists, like Dr. Jim Loehr, have done an excellent job of communicating the necessity of improving one's mental toughness. So often, especially in the pros, the difference between two combatants is that one is more confident and mentally tough than the other. You need only look at some of the past #1 players like Hogan, Yellen, Brumfield, and Adams. It is easily recognizable that their mental toughness separated them from the rest of the pack. Our present #1's, Cliff Swain and Michelle Gould, are showing us that they are cut from the same mold as their predecessors. Certain players, like Andy Roberts, use intense mental conditioning as one of the most important aspects of their professional tournament preparation.

As a player you must come to realize that mental toughness is a wall that you must continually climb for the rest of your racquetball life. A question often asked of me is: How can I improve my mental toughness? One answer is for you and your practice partner to play specific match simulations designed to help you close out games (when you are ahead) or fight to come back in a set when you are behind. To do this, alternate starting at two games to one in a pro style three of five match to eleven. This type of match play simulation will definitely help to improve your mental toughness.





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KILLSHOT is published five times a year by Quertermous and Quertermous, Inc. P.O. Box 8036, Paducah, Kentucky 42002-8036. Offices are located at 2212 Kentucky Avenue, Paducah, Kentucky 42003. ISSN # 1069-2614

Subscriptions in the U.S. and possessions are \$18.94 for one year, \$32.00 for two years; Canadian subscriptions are \$28.94 for one year; South American subscriptions are \$41.95 for one year; European subscriptions are \$56.95 for one year; Asian subscriptions are \$66.95 for one year. (Foreign subscriptions are due in U.S. funds) Back issues are available on selected issues.

Third-class postage paid at Nashville, Tennessee. Printed in June, 1993 (Volume 3, Number 3).

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(Editorial Comments)

Wow! Look What I Found

Nothing quite matches the excitement of a pleasant surprise, like finding out something was even better than you'd imagined it would be. Sort of like opening up a package you are already excited about and finding that the contents surpass even your wildest fantasies.

It was kind of like that as the article on the evolution of the racquet was taking shape. (Darwinian Racquetball page 41) Packages arrived that we knew had good stuff inside but when we tore into them we were elated at the contents. Holding onto racquets we remembered playing (and even learning) with and the opportunity to handle some we had only heard about made the experience more fun than work.

A few people were kind enough to

give us their opinions of what were the ground breaking frames of the past and present. Others even went a little further and shipped us examples (some rare and valuable).

David and Beverly Harris at the Paducah Harbor Plaza loaned us an early Joe Sobek Paddle Racket that I suppose we will eventually have to return. Paducah's Nautilus Racquet and Swim Club sent over a couple of frames as did friends and local players Dr. Greg Martin, Wayne Gage, Denver Parman, and Diane Byrd. My sister Vicki even came through with some nifty racquets that she had squirreled away.

John Boudman, The Racquet Stringer, (always around when you need him) shipped us a few examples. Alice Inoue at E-Force provided a racquet that

looked like new as did Brian Feeney at Spalding with some early examples. Ektelon's Tom Odishoo sent us several one-of-a-kind frames from the early days of the sport. Ian Arthur at Head also provided some early racquets and Frank Loni sent us an example from Wilson.

Finally Mike Ray sort of ignited the idea when he gave us the racquet he used to win the 1992 TransCoastal Grand Nationals.

Some of the racquets show a little wear and tear around the edges with missing logos and replaced grips. Others are pristine examples looking like they just came out of the showroom. At any rate we hope we've given a fairly balanced look at how the racquet has progressed.

--S. Q.

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Do It Like The Pros Do

The Backhand

By Aaron Katz

The most common observation at professional tournaments is the power and efficiency that most of the pros generate with their backhands. Splats, pinches, angles, and deception are all a part of the top players' backhand arsenals. The days of pinning your buttocks against the side wall to hit a forehand are gone as many of the top players prefer their backhand. By posing some common questions regarding the backhand and dispelling some myths that have been perpetuated throughout racquetball history we will explore the proper backhand technique.

Question #1: Should I rotate my grip on my backhand?

This is the age old question in racquetball. While there is still a faction (although quickly diminishing) of players who advocate not rotating grips, the large percentage of top players do rotate grips. In fact, my latest count had only two of the top fifteen players not rotating grips.

For the right-handed player the grip should be rotated 1/8 to 1/4 turn to the left (see photo 2), the opposite for left-handed players. This grip rotation allows the player to "square" the racquet head to the ball and hit "flatter", making it easier to hit

down-the-line without nicking the side wall and kicking into center court. Using a forehand grip on a backhand shot will make it necessary to use an "educated wrist" to flatten-out the shot. This rolling of the wrist will invariably lead to inconsistencies in the backhand as the adjustment will vary depending on the angle and speed of the ball.

Many players find it easier to start in a backhand grip, particularly on the return of serve, since that is where most shots go in the rally and then rotate to the forehand grip when necessary.

Question #2: Where should I start my racquet prep position?

The common answer to this question "wrapped behind your head" is one of the biggest fallacies in the sport. This incorrect racquet preparation will lead to emphasizing the elbow and wrist snap too much and neglecting the leg and hip rotation which is where most of the power comes from on the backhand. In addition, I have always felt the "jarring" motion created by this prep position is one of the major causes of elbow problems. The pros with the best backhands: Jack Newman, Drew Kachtik, Andy Roberts, and Egan Inoue stretch



Photo 1. Proper racquet position.

the racquet up and away from their heads (photo 1). This allows for maximum weight transfer as well as proper extension. This position creates a natural stroke curve to allow yourself to level off at contact (photos 3, 4 & 5). To maximize wrist snap, cock the wrist upward. Do not coil your wrist or loop your wrist around, as this would create excess movement, causing you to be late on the ball.

Question #3: How should I step when hitting the backhand?

The most common problem on the step to the backhand is stepping too sharply into the sidewall. This sharp step will cause you to block off your hips at contact, preventing a proper follow through, limiting both power and control. By stepping more toward the front wall (photo 6) you will allow yourself to maximize power from your lower body as well as keep all your shot selection opportunities available to yourself down-the-line, cross-court, and pinch.

Question #4: What shots should I hit from the backhand side?

While this answer will vary with the situation and it is necessary to mix your shots, a good rule of thumb is to hit 70% to



Photo 2: Backhand grip



Photo 3. Proper wrist cock



Photo 6. Correct step

80% of your offensive backhands from behind your opponent to your opponent's backhand. This means if you are a right hander playing a right hander, hit your backhand down-the-line! Probably the number one reason I see players losing matches in tournaments is because of their inability or unwillingness to hit a solid backhand pass/kill down-the-line. Too often we want to be heroes and hit the great rollout or splat shot. Even the top pros use the splat shot judiciously and usually only

Photo 4. Proper stroke curve



Photo 5. Correct point of contact

after they have set it up with their down-the-line shot.

Question #5: How should I follow through on my backhand?

The follow through should complete the level stroke and continue towards the front wall and all the way around towards the sidewall. At the end of your stroke the hip rotation (on the power backhand) should cause the back foot to drag forward and leave your hips opened up to the front wall. (photo 7)

So, get out there and start practicing your backhand, so you too can do it like the pros.

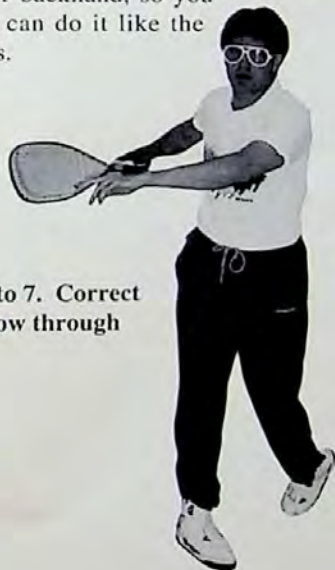


Photo 7. Correct follow through

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Training, Improvement, and Motivation

By Ruben Gonzalez

(Former Pro National Champion)

Attitude

To improve the most from your training, keep in mind that you are training to improve. No matter how much you practice, unless you are focussed on improvement, you are probably spending lots of time getting only marginally better. Remember, every drill you do, every shot you take in practice, you must do it as though you are in a match, in order to carry it into your matches with you. Anyone can go out and drill until they can hit a certain shot the right way in practice. Training to improve means learning the shot with your body (your legs as well as your arm), learning the idea in your head, changing your perception of the ball, getting the "feel" of moving well and going for winners.

Take for instance, hitting down-the-line's. You pretty much have to keep doing drop-and-hit's to get the shot right. If that's all you do, you will probably be able to hit it perfectly if the ball happens to drop in front of you the same way it does in practice. If you get into the mind set of a match, you will start to practice with a purpose. Think of other factors, your opponent, your own movement to the ball and after the follow through, etc. This way

in a match, you not only have confidence in your shot, but also in all the other factors that go into it. When you are left with an opportunity in a match, it's automatic.

Next take this same way of practicing and apply it to pinches, ceiling balls, different serves, etc. Practice with determination; work to build confidence as well as ability. You have to want to improve to work at it this way.



In the Beginning

In order to progress right from the start, first you have to decide how bad you want it. Ask yourself this:

Will you...

...spend the time?

...learn the right way?

...find teachers and practice partners?

...go to instructional camps?

...change the parts of your game that aren't working?

...stay with it?

If you are willing, try these tips:

Use your available time on the court. Spend 2-3 hours, 2-3 times per week practicing alone, and with a practice partner.

Avoid bad habits. Get with qualified teachers or camp instructors periodically to make sure that you are not just teaching yourself bad habits.

If you try a camp, take a few days off from playing before. Then be ready to lose for a while afterward, while you are working into your game the things you learned.

Take risks. Always go for better shots. Unless you are in a tournament, a league where standing is important, or playing for money, take risks by practicing going for better and better shots, knowing that for a while you will have plenty of skips and miss-hits. You have to take the risks to get better.

Play all out, every time out. Never take it easy on the court. Ever.

Improving

As you get better, practice gives you confidence and determination turns into "killer instinct". Combined, this means that you start playing chess instead of checkers. The fun of the game becomes moving your opponent around effectively. You will have better rallies, and better matches. In the beginning, improvement comes faster. As you get better, the improvements come more slowly, but you will probably enjoy them much more.

Footwork

by Tim Sweeney

(Three Time Intercollegiate Champion)

Footwork is one of the most important aspects of racquetball. Good footwork improves your speed, allows you to make difficult start-stop movements more easily, and improves both the accuracy and power of your shots. I can think of only a couple of good ways to really improve your footwork. You may find the first way hard to make yourself practice, but with a little dedication, it certainly provides a big payoff. I prefer the second way. I think you'll see why.

The first method to improve your footwork is the way nobody wants to hear. You need to find an open court and be ready to sweat. Once on the court, you will be doing what we call the "shuffle drill". In the shuffle drill, you run the length of the court in a shuffle motion. That is, no big side steps, just a one foot up, one foot down shuffling motion. Begin at the back-wall facing the side wall. Keep your knees slightly bent then shuffle to the short line. Touch the line then shuffle back to the backwall and touch it. Shuffle past the short line to the service line, touch it and shuffle back to the backwall. This process should be repeated four to six times.

The higher caliber player might want to do this drill a little more than the lower caliber player. It may feel (and look) silly at first, but you will quickly get the feel of shuffling as you would move in a match. This drill is very effective because the shuffle motion is the motion most used during rallies. Many of the pros can be seen using this technique as part of their warm-up routine at tournaments. We all do it, and see a difference. So will you.

The other method to help improve footwork is a new type of game played on a racquetball court called smallball. You

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Albuquerque, NM	July 24 - 25	Newman/Roberts	Springfield, MA	Sept. 11 - 12	Newman/Gonzalez
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can view a sample of smallball at the end of Ektelon's Playing Smart video. In fact that video contains footage from the first official (unofficial) World Smallball Championship.

Smallball is played at the front of the court between the front wall and the service line (not the short line) using the side wall as the front wall. In addition to improving footwork, it also improves timing, reflexes, and touch. The object of the game is to keep both players moving all the time. Smallball has a few rules that should be noted.

1. The first, and most important, rule is you can't hit the ball hard. You never actually take a full swing at the ball.

2. Any ball that bounces outside the service line is out. A ball can bounce inside the service line and be played out-

side the service line.

3. Only one serve is allowed and it must be a lob serve.

4. Anything else is just like racquetball, or as close as you can get in this amount of space and keeping with the spirit of smallball.

Try the drills, watch for the results, and I think you'll see that footwork is one of the most important aspects of racquetball. You could have terrific strokes but if your feet don't get you to the ball and support you through the strokes, your shot ability is meaningless. Believe it or not, I do both types of drills. (The shuffle drill helps improve my smallball.) So don't get caught standing flat-footed. Remember, lazy feet are bad feet!

Playing Doubles Like the Pros By Doug Ganim

(Three Time National and World
Doubles Champion)

One of the most exciting aspects of the sport of racquetball is the doubles game. For those of you who have seen pro doubles in person, you know that it is unparalleled in raw athleticism and excitement. The only thing I like more than playing doubles is sitting in the front row watching four pros do battle down to the last rollout. In my opinion, these matches offer the sports enthusiast more excitement than any other professional sport.

Traveling the country as an "America's Most Wanted" racquetball instructor, I often field questions regarding doubles. The fact is, very little instruction-

al materials exist about the doubles game. My goal in this article is to give you a few basic tips that will start you and your partner on the road to playing doubles like the pros.

Tip #1:

Find a permanent partner. One of the keys to successful doubles play is to create a chemistry between two players so that they play as one. This kind of magic takes time to develop and can only be obtained through frequent play with the same individual. When choosing a partner, look for someone who compliments your own strengths and weaknesses—for instance, if you are a slower player with an average backhand you might look for a partner with a strong forehand and above average speed. Choosing the right partner is half the battle.

Tip #2:

Using a side by side staggered pattern, cover the court to the point where the only shot that can beat you is a flat rollout. A racquetball court is fairly small and two players working flawlessly in unison can cover the court to the point where a rollout is the only shot that can't be retrieved. It has been a long debated subject as to whether a front-back or side to side strategy is best for court coverage in doubles. It has been my experience that using a staggered side by side pattern, a team can reap the benefits of front and back coverage while keeping both players involved offensively. Front and back coverage works well when only one of the two players can shoot the ball well from deep in the court



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offensive shots in doubles are the splat and the wide-angle pass. These two shots are very difficult to hit off of a sharply hit and well placed jam serve. Second, it is not uncommon for a jam serve to hit the crack on side wall and become nonreturnable. Since aces are almost impossible in doubles an accidental crack off of a jam serve is always welcome!

Tip #6:
Keep your intensity level high for best performance. Doubles is a very physical game which often features teams riding momentum waves. Rallies are longer than in singles and your reaction time is often less which requires extremely quick racquet preparation and execution. When you are pumped up your body is better suited for the conditions of doubles play. Plus you tend to build momentum in your teams favor when your intensity outshines your opponents.

Tip #7:
Great teams always complement each other psychologically as well as physically. This means that when your partner is down you have to pick up the slack. Knowing what to say and how to say it may make all the difference when your partner needs a lift. I always admire a team that can find a way to win when one of the players is in a slump.

Tip #8:
Don't skip the ball! The way doubles points are won and lost is through strategy and intensity. The only sure fire way to lose a point is by skipping the ball. It was always my goal in doubles to limit skips to as few as possible through effective momentum management. What I mean by this is that when we were "on" and really feeling good, we would shoot for the kill and make the shots. In times when our rhythm was "off" I would concentrate on well placed passing shots to keep us in every point.

There is obviously a lot more to playing great doubles than just the eight tips I have outlined above but these ideas will give you the basic framework to begin to build your team into a winning combination. Any players who would like to attend an "America's Most Wanted" camp as a team will receive specialized doubles instruction by the pros. I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming camp and keep rolling them out!

But if both players have strong offensive skills, a staggered side by side pattern is best.

Tip #3:
When choosing an offensive shot, concentrate on beating your opponent on the opposite side of the court. The two most valuable shots in doubles play are the splat and the wide angle pass. Both these shots involve manipulating the player on the opposite side of the court from where you are shooting the ball. For instance, if I am about to shoot a backhand from deep in the court my immediate attention is focused across the court. If that player is too deep in the court I will shoot the splat. If the player is up too close I will shoot the wide angle pass. My goal is to beat that player, not the player on my side of the court. This is one of the biggest strategy mistakes I see people make in doubles. Down the line is almost always covered in doubles yet players are so determined to beat their opponent on the same side of the court that this shot becomes over used.

Tip #4:
When your partner is drive serving, know exactly what serve he/she is going to hit. You and your partner should have some type of verbal or non-verbal communication so that you know which serve will be hit and to which player on the opposing team. The idea is to fake out the other team with a deceptive serve, not your own partner. If you know what serve will be hit by your partner, you will be able to relocate out of the box more effectively for maximum coverage of the next shot.

Tip #5:
Develop an effective drive serve to the center of the back court. One of the most effective serves in doubles is the famous serve to the center of the back court. The reason this is so effective is two-fold. First, you will remember earlier in this article I mentioned that the two best

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Las Vegas
Richcraft Nationals
A "Ray" of Hope
By Mark Henry

To see a frame manufacturer's name as the title sponsor of a professional event seems reminiscent of a time when rival companies hosted the two most prestigious pro events of the season in years past. When many players had lost track of Richcraft and their products, the now Idaho-based company re-emerges with product, and a sponsorship and signature racquet for Bret Harnett. Thus, in a return to a successful idea from the past, the Richcraft Nationals are born.

Mike Coulter and company along with Ripe Plum, Up Time, and others engineered the IRT's return to Las Vegas in grand style. The Sporting House offered the pros a very welcome and unusual feature - full front wall glass. What spectators saw in full view in Vegas was a mixed bag of upsets and domination by the control players.

On the opening day, Pittsburgh's Dan Obremski, still nursing a bad right shoulder, was forced to drop out. This afforded Guy Humphrey a ticket into the sixteens. Dan Fowler, becoming a familiar face on the IRT, captured his first pro win at the expense of #11 Woody Clouse. In one of the best matches of his career, Tony Jelso dug in for a big upset of #4 seed Ruben Gonzalez. Egan Inoue, testing the waters of the IRT after his official retirement, found trouble and even a doughnut in the

fifth from Chicago's Jack Newman. Canada's Roger Harripersad, becoming a force with which to be reckoned at IRT events, fell in the thirty-twos to an intense and extremely focused Aaron Katz.

Katz stayed on a roll in the sixteens with a five game upset of #1 seed Andy Roberts that stunned the crowd. Katz, a tour veteran, has played out-of-his-mind racquetball in recent weeks. Roberts, one of the few pros intimidated by no man and equally ready to play power or control could do little with Katz' precise angles and unusual over-heads. In a very physical battle usually reserved for fellow Texan Drew Kachtik, Katz claimed his first win against Roberts to date.

Kachtik advanced in the round as well in a much less physical match, but after a good showing by Humphrey. Experience prevailed as yet another power player, Oregon's Vince Kelley, fell to #2 seed Cliff Swain. Jelso also continued his run of wins with a convincing

victory in three over Fowler. In one of the few matches of the tournament where the power player won, California's Dave Johnson blasted his way for the win in five over the ultimate control player, Mike Yellen. Top guns Mike Ray, Tim Doyle,





and Harnett all advanced with their typical flair.

Jelso and Kachtik went the distance in the quarters extending their match to five games. A long serve by Jelso at 10-10 in the breaker gave Kachtik the opening he needed to close out the match at 12-10. A good tournament for Jelso, Las Vegas may be a very positive turning point in his career.

Katz found his way into his first pro semi with a five game upset of Johnson. Ray made the tally 4-0 in '92-'93 match-ups with Doyle. Swain added another to his long string of victories this season with his quarterfinal win over last year's Las Vegas winner, Harnett.

Ray, not intimidated by Swain's onslaught this season, frustrated Swain enough for a five game victory. At the top of the draw, Katz had little trouble eliminating practice partner and fellow Texan Kachtik.

The final was a smart four games resulting in a Ray win in four. With Katz controlling the first game, Ray finally settled into his pace and took the following three. Well past the season's half-way point, the list of pro stop winners remained only four names long.

Memphis

Hampton Inns Pro Classic

MSU Players Shine - Swain Wins

By Mark Henry

Coming off a victory in Las Vegas, Ray had recaptured the number one spot as the IRT landed in Memphis. Nearing the official season end, the race for the national championship was in full swing. With only a four man field of event winners from the 1992-1993 season, four of the top eight positions open for the TransCoastal Tournament of Champions in June were still very much up for grabs. Hungry for his second home court win in three Memphis events, Roberts was pumped, but shaking off the effects of a passing cold. Last year's winner, Yellen, made Memphis one stop on his current abbreviated tour

Opposite, Clockwise from upper left: From Las Vegas, Swain with a near-get against Mike Ray; Harnett clears for Swain; Swain returns the favor; ditto, Ray for Katz; Kachtik dives to return a Jelso shot; Katz and Kachtik

Photos by Robert Liparelli

schedule. Top players from the Memphis State team had prepared for the event all year. All in all, the stage was set for an all out war.

Memphis State team members were responsible for both upsets in the round of 32. Scott Reiff captured the first with a victory over Florida's Clouse. Next, Venezuela's Fabion Balmori managed a big four game upset of #6 seed Doyle. One of the most solid top eight pros for three seasons, Doyle has rarely seen the tournament that he was eliminated in the 32's.

Neither Reiff nor Balmori could maintain momentum in the second round, falling to Texas' best - Kachtik and Mike Guidry respectively in three games. Canada's

SEMIS
Kachtik d. Ray
11-5, 8-11, 11-5, 8-11, 11-7
Swain d. Guidry
13-11, 7-11, 11-7, 11-9

SIXTEENS

Ray d. O'Neil
7-11, 11-9, 12-10, 6-11, 11-8
Yellen d. Johnson
11-7, 4-11, 11-9, 11-6
Kachtik d. Reiff
11-4, 11-7, 11-6
Obremski d. Gonzalez
6-11, 11-7, 7-11, 11-2, 11-0
Roberts d. Ceresia
10-12, 11-2, 12-10, 11-1
Guidry d. Balmori
11-3, 11-7, 11-2
Harnett d. Newman
11-8, 9-11, 11-1, 11-2
Swain d. Krickorian
11-7, 11-8, 11-4

Cliff Swain

5-11, 11-1, 11-4, 11-8
Drew Kachtik

QUARTERS

Ray d. Yellen
11-9, 11-9, 11-3
Kachtik d. Obremski
11-4, 11-9, 12-10
Guidry d. Roberts
11-4, 11-7, 8-11, 4-11, 11-7
Swain d. Harnett
11-7, 11-3, 11-1

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best, Mike Ceresia gave Roberts big trouble in the first game before allowing Roberts the win in four. Struggling out of an up and down (mostly down) season for Obremski, he turned in one of his best showings of the year by taking out Gonzalez in five that ended with the notorious doughnut delivery. Yellen played with authority to successfully avenge his loss to Johnson in Las Vegas at the Richcraft Nationals just weeks prior. Swain won in



three but with respectable scores from an improving Jason Krickorian. Memphis State star from years past Newman found no home court advantage as he fell to Los Vegas' Harnett in four.

Ray had a bit of trouble from Todd O'Neil but prevailed in the fifth. O'Neil still remembered how to play Ray from the days when he played for Memphis State while Ray lived in neighboring Jackson, then Nashville, Tennessee. Both past and

From Memphis, far left: Guidry sticks one in the corner in the semis. Left: Kachtik drills Swain with a powerful overhead.

Photos by Ron Jau

current Memphis State players seem to always play extremely well at the luxuriant Racquet Club of Memphis.

The quarters in Memphis may have provided the most three game matches ever for the men's pro tour. Three of the four matches ended with three games. In the only exception, Guidry fought through five tough games for the upset win against the crowd favorite, Roberts. Guidry's determination carried into the semi's with one extended game and one game victory against Swain. It was, in fact, the best showing against Swain of the tournament and one of only two games taken from him throughout the event.

Kachtik and Ray matched up for a great spectacle of smart placement, good anticipation, and the season's most unorthodox display of overhead shots. Kachtik managed the upset in five that really could have gone either way. Kachtik found no more success in the final against Swain than he had had in Atlanta. Swain, the most successful player of the season, hesitated only slightly for one game before knocking out Kachtik in the remaining three.

Los Angeles

VW Credit Series Fourth Event

It Even "Swains" in Southern California

By Aaron Katz

If Swain is not driving a Volkswagen yet, he should consider it. Swain dominated the field to emerge victorious for his third win out of four VCI tournaments and took sole possession of the #1 spot on the pro tour. The third Los Angeles area event this season marked the second collaboration between Jim Carson and company and VCI and the third Los Angeles area win for Swain.

The first round produced only one major upset as the scrappy Mike Bronfeld wore down a fatigued Yellen 11-7 in the tie breaker. A minor upset occurred when Guidry let a 10-4 lead in the tie breaker slip away to Inoue who seems to be recommitting to the men's pro tour and facing a diffi-

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Semifinalists at the VW Credit Challenge Series event in Los Angeles, Tim Doyle, left, Andy Roberts, right

Photos by Charlie Palek

cult climb back up the rankings after a self imposed hiatus.

The round of sixteen provided the usual score of upsets and great matches.

The biggest upset was #15 O'Neil taking out Ray, the #2 seed. Although O'Neil only plays the tour sporadically, he seems to give Ray plenty of trouble, as both these lefties play a slow control game and their matches always seem to go the distance. However, the marquee match of the sixteens was a spectator's delight. Two of the most physically fit pros, Harnett and Inoue went toe-to-toe for two and one half hours. This author remembers watching these two

champions play when they were ranked #1 and #3. It was odd watching them duel it out in the second round with one ranked #7 and the other #23. It is indicative of all the new talent that has been infused into the pro tour. Anyway, after that walk through memory lane, I was treated to a 12-10 tie breaker victory for Inoue who reached his first quarterfinal in over a year and a half.

The quarters began with six of the top eight seeds still remaining. The first quarterfinal match featured Gonzalez and Kachtik. Two of the quicker players on the tour, this duo always matches up well. It has been an unusual rivalry with one player always seeming to beat the other, two or three consecutive times, as opposed to trading off matches as do so many of the top players. Kachtik got off to a quick start, winning the first game. He was up 10-5 in the second before the wheels came off and Gonzalez came back to win 12-10. He then took the third and fourth with relative ease advancing the elder statesman of the tour to the semifinals.

The second quarterfinal match pitted the recently slumping #3 seed Roberts against Inoue. Roberts had lost in the round of 16 and quarterfinals in his previous two tournaments and knew a victory here was crucial for his run at the national title. Inoue proved he is back for real and ready to contend again, but Roberts' mental toughness and consistency proved to be too much as he prevailed with a close four game victory.

The third quarterfinal was relatively anticlimactic as Doyle advanced to his first semifinal of 1993 with a three game sweep of O'Neil. O'Neil had plenty of opportunities in the second and third games but could not capitalize.

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The last quarterfinal matched Swain with Johnson, one of the most athletic and unpredictable of the IRT pros. Although Swain has dominated since the first of the year, Johnson has been his most visible nemesis. Johnson's agility and fitness seem to match up well against the intense offensive onslaught of Swain. This match was no different as they fought for five tough games with Swain taking the win 11-3 in the fifth.

The semifinals saw two great rivalries and interesting scenarios. The Doyle-Roberts rivalry dates back to the 1989 amateur finals and has continued throughout their professional careers. Doyle and Roberts had both struggled of late and a final appearance would be just the right cure. Doyle dominated from the start and advanced to his first finals appearance since September.

The second semifinal matched Gonzalez against Swain. This great rivalry dates back to the early 1980's when Swain was an up-and-coming junior player and Gonzalez was the premiere open player on the east coast. Unfortunately for Gonzalez, he was dealt the fate the other pros have been receiving from Swain as his serve and

retrieving ability proved too much. Swain advanced with a three game victory.

The final between Doyle and Swain featured the two premiere servers in the sport today. On the fast cement courts of LA Fitness in Anaheim, it figured to be a server's delight. Doyle hung in and fought the whole way and has clearly benefited from his off court speed training. It was not enough as Swain was victorious for the fifth time this season. Swain put himself in great position for his second national title as he leads #2 Mike Ray by 100 points going into the final tournament of the season, the TransCoastal Grand Nationals in Seattle.

Cliff Swain

11-5, 12-10, 6-11, 11-7
Tim Doyle

SEMIS

Swain d. Gonzalez
11-8, 11-8, 13-11
Doyle d. Roberts
11-6, 11-9, 11-2

QUARTERS

Swain d. Johnson
5-11, 11-6, 12-10, 5-11, 11-3,
Gonzalez d. Kachtik
6-11, 12-10, 11-6, 11-3
Roberts d. Inoue
5-11, 11-7, 13-11, 11-5
Doyle d. O'Neil
11-5, 12-10, 14-12

SIXTEENS

Swain d. Katz
11-2, 11-5, 11-4
Johnson d. Bronfeld
11-7, 11-7, 11-3
Gonzalez d. Obremski
11-3, 11-9, 12-10
Kachtik d. Clouse
6-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-6
Roberts d. Ceresia
11-2, 11-6, 11-4
Inoue d. Harnett
12-10, 4-11, 11-7, 3-11, 12-10
Doyle d. Newman
11-8, 11-4, 11-5
O'Neil d. Ray
10-12, 11-9, 10-12, 11-8, 11-2

Los Angeles

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Dallas, Texas
5. Ruben Gonzalez (4)
Staten Island, New York
6. Tim Doyle (6)
Huntington Beach, California
7. Bret Harnett (7)
Las Vegas, Nevada
8. Dave Johnson (8T)
Huntington Beach, California
9. Jack Newman (8T)
Hoffman Estates, Illinois
10. Mike Guidry (10)
Dallas, Texas
11. Dan Obremski (11T)
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
12. Woody Clouse (11T)
Jacksonville, Florida
13. Mike Ceresia (14)
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
14. Tim Sweeney (13)
Chicago, Illinois
15. Jason Krickorian (15T)
Boston, Massachusetts
16. Aaron Katz
Dallas, Texas

WPRA

1. Michelle Gould (1)
Boise, Idaho
2. Marci Drexler (2)
San Diego, California
3. Malia Bailey (6)
Norfolk, Virginia
4. Jacqueline Paraiso-Gibson (3)
San Diego, California
5. Robin Levine (7)
Sacramento, California
6. Lynne Coburn (10)
Baltimore, Maryland
7. Toni Bevelock (4)
Santa Ana, California
8. Caryn McKinney
Atlanta, Georgia
9. Kaye Kuhfeld (9)
Indianapolis, Indiana
10. Molly O'Brien (15)
Souderton, Pennsylvania
11. Chris Evon (11)
San Diego, California
12. Marcy Lyncy (8)
North Wales, Pennsylvania
13. Ellen Crawford (16)
Minoa, New York
- 14T. Cheryl Gudinas
Lisle, Illinois
- 14T. Robin Whitmire (12T)
Atlanta, Georgia
16. Cindy Doyle
Omaha, Nebraska

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- 4T. Sal Perconti
- 4T. Marc Harrell

1. Julie Decker
2. Claudia Andrade
3. Kattia Disbrow
4. Lourdes Lavastida
- 5T. Jan Watson
- 5T. Diana Garza-Hartge

B

1. Marcus Barnes
- T2. Ron Alvey
- T2. Alain Perez
- T2. Dewayne Sullivan
5. Greg Deharo

1. Carla Alford
2. Lynn Malonn
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4. Sandy Fox
5. Sharon Budnick

The featured state in the next issue
of VCI Spreadsheet will be
California



Solid Gould

Michelle shows what she's made of as she continues to storm the WPRA tour

Atlanta
Pizza Hut Racquetball Challenge
Gould Claims the South

The second event of the 1993 WPRA season, Atlanta's Pizza Hut Racquetball Challenge has become a favorite WPRA tradition. This year, even after rescheduling, the event drew a field of thirty players from across the US. The healthy Atlanta crowds indicated that even in a confusing "year of transition" for the WPRA, the racquetball world still eagerly supports a women's pro tour. The work of Caryn McKinney and team along with Pizza Hut and Pepsi certainly contributes heavily to this.

In the opening round, every contest except one ended quickly in three games. In an example of the best from the old and

new styles, Robin Levine eliminated Susan Morgan-Pfahler in four games. Levine, from the exciting kamikaze school of play delivered an intense, highly physical effort to prevail over the experience, confidence and precision of Morgan-Pfahler.

The first notable upset of the round came from California's Holly Gray over WPRA president Dee Ferriera-Worth. Making a name for herself in WPRA play this season, Florida's Kersten Hallander bettered her standing by dispatching one of Atlanta's home favorites, Robin Whitmire.

In the sixteens, Gray could not maintain. The intercollegiate contender went down in three close ones to #2 seed and previous pro stop winner Marci Drexler. Kaye Kuhfeld held tough for a three game win over Chris Evon. Levine did continue winning by taking out a clearly improving Cheryl Gudinas. In her first appearance

back from an ankle injury that caused her to miss the Philadelphia event, Toni Bevelock fell to veteran Molly O'Brien for the second time in two years at the Atlanta event. #1 seed Michelle Gould quickly destroyed a frustrated Lynne Coburn. Cindy Doyle, former intercollegiate champion, national doubles champion, and junior national doubles champion appears committed to the tour this year, eliminating a less-than-recovered Marcy Lynch with relative ease.

Controversy played a roll in the McKinney vs. Paraiso-Gibson match. In the beginning, the veteran McKinney had a tough time capitalizing on Paraiso-Gibson's left-up balls. Over-hitting against Paraiso-Gibson's consistent shots left McKinney down two games to zero going into the third. Midway into the match, referee Otto Deitrich called a hinder when Paraiso-Gibson moved into McKinney on a ball McKinney apparently believed was down. After McKinney's futile inquiry to the referee, the crowd voiced its disapproval with the call. The controversy of the call seemed to spark life back into McKinney and the reaction of the crowd simply stoked the flame. McKinney adjusted her strokes, found her pace, and controlled the next three games to claim the victory over a bewildered Paraiso-Gibson.

In Hallander's best showing to date, she opened her sixteens match with Malia Bailey by grabbing a two game advantage. Hallander has had the talent and a good solid game for some time, but now seems to be able to settle down for better mental control to maximize her efforts. Bailey,

Michelle Gould is back in true tournament form after recovery from knee surgery.

Charlie Palek



however, has such a tough all around game that even a two game cushion is not enough. Her unusually short strokes disguising her power and precision, Bailey is simply tough to beat. Bailey's comeback for 11 - 3 wins in the following three games was an awesome display of athletic ability.

In the quarters, Gould never allowed Doyle, her former doubles partner, an opening to gain control. McKinney's momentum carried her to a fast win over the younger Levine. Drexler kept herself in line for her second straight tournament win by taking out Indianapolis' Kuhfeld. Bailey called all the shots for a three game win over O'Brien.

In the semi's Gould uncharacteristically gave Bailey some extra opportunities which Bailey was all over. Gould seemed to be a little sluggish and delivered far more returnable serves than usual. Remembering that Bailey's ability could not be taken lightly, Gould mounted a successful offensive in the fifth for the win. With that, Gould asserted that she is back 100% and any notion Bailey might have of

an upset might be put to rest. Bailey and Paraiso-Gibson stand to lose the most ground this season with Gould's return and Drexler's renewed passion for victory.

McKinney surprised even her own crowd of fans by dispatching Drexler in three. Playing Drexler properly, McKinney seemed to push the ball, leaving Drexler's timing way off and forcing her to overkill. Looking as though the match were turning around in the third and about to swing to Drexler's advantage, McKinney reached down for the extra determination it took to fight back and scored eight unanswered points to come from 9 - 3 for the 11 - 9 win.

In the final, it seemed Gould was a machine. Her blazing passes were way out of McKinney's reach and even her off-balance shots found the perfect mark. Only three of Gould's serves in three games came off the back wall and back into play. McKinney's attempts to move Gould to gain control were useless. When all was said and done, Gould left with the check and solid #1 ranking.



Malia Bailey played extremely well but found a stopper in Gould in both events.

Charlie Palek

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Michelle Gould

11-2, 11-7, 11-3

Caryn McKinney

SEMIS

Gould d. Bailey

11-5, 5-11, 11-3, 7-11, 11-2

McKinney d. Drexler

11-8, 11-9, 11-10

QUARTERS

Gould d. Doyle

11-3, 11-2, 11-5

Bailey d. O'Brien

11-8, 11-6, 11-3

McKinney d. Levine

11-2, 11-5, 11-10

Drexler d. Kuhfeld

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

SIXTEENS

Gould d. Coburn

11-2, 11-7, 11-2

Doyle d. Lynch

11-8, 11-9, 11-6

Bailey d. Hallander

6-11, 10-11, 11-3, 11-3, 11-3

O'Brien d. Bevelock

11-7, 11-6, 11-7

McKinney d. P.-Gibson

9-11, 8-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-7

Levine d. Gudinas

11-3, 11-4, 8-11, 11-5

Kuhfeld d. Evon

11-6, 11-2, 11-9

Drexler d. Gray

11-9, 11-9, 11-7

Atlanta

Syracuse Track & Racquet Pro Am Gould Claims the North, Too

Now in its second year, the Syracuse Track & Racquet pro stop is already a favorite among players. A sometimes player on the men's tour, Jeff Hanno has begun a tradition with the event that is likely to just get better in years to come. This time out, it was marked by great showings by Ellen Crawford and Coburn. In the end though, it was as it has been, Gould's show.

The opening round in Syracuse held no upsets. There were however more four and five game matches than in most WPRA events. Local favorite Doreen Metzold took California's Evon to four games before falling to Evon's expe-

rience. The other local favorite, Crawford, fared better at the other end of the draw by coming out on the better end of a four game bout with Kim Macharin. In the best match of the round, Doyle went nip and tuck through five ultra-close ones for the win over Janet Myers. In two other crowd-pleasers, Gudinas over Lauren Shepro and Coburn over Laura Fenton also went the distance.

The match of the sixteens came at the bottom of the draw with Crawford's big upset of #2 seed Drexler. Drexler's unorthodox style and awesome athletic ability have made her a frustrating opponent for the top WPRA pros. One of the most promising players on the tour several seasons back, Drexler was forced to take a break from touring during recovery from a serious knee injury. Now back and holding the #2 ranking, she has surpassed her best ranking from the past of #3 after a big win over Gould in the final at the Philadelphia Diet Pepsi Grand Slam earlier this year. Crawford finished a good rookie season last year, but was certainly an underdog in this match.

Crawford used offspeed shots to take Drexler out of her run-and-gun game style. Drexler, a bit over eager to cut off too many of Crawford's shots only became frustrated at Crawford's play. Crawford, to the delight of the crowd, maintained a cool exterior and an amazing level of confidence. If she can keep up the heat on the road as well as she did in this match at home, Crawford should be in for a big season.

Bevelock had some trouble out of the gate, dropping the first game to Loraine Galloway, before grabbing the next three for the win. Bailey was able to handle Doyle in this round with surprising ease, letting only one game slip away for the win in four.

In the quarters, even Levine's go-for-it-all style was no match for Gould. Bailey and Kuhfeld played their gazillionth match with Bailey calling all the shots this time out. Bevelock could mount no offense

In an interesting and surprising match, Ellen Crawford returns Lynne Coburn's serve at the Track & Racquet Club in Syracuse.

Photo courtesy Track & Racquet Club



against Paraiso-Gibson until it was much too late in the third game. Crawford nearly managed to pull out another big upset against Coburn with a two to one game lead going into the fourth. Coburn was able to turn up the heat for the next two that would keep Crawford out of her first semi.

Looking for revenge after her loss to Gould in Atlanta, Bailey has correctly assessed the situation that to get to the top of the WPRA, you have to be able to consistently get past Gould. In Syracuse, it was not meant to be. Gould found her toughest match and only game loss of the event against Bailey, but headed to the final anyway.

Coburn went in an underdog against Paraiso-Gibson, but again came from two to one going into the fourth for the win. Coburn headed for her first final in Syracuse, and judging by her ability, maybe her first of many. Having to wade through three five-gamers in the WPRA is a somewhat unusual circumstance, but Coburn proved she can hang tough with no loss of intensity.

Lynn Adams represented the emotional aspect of human nature when she dominated the national championship with

the fire of determination that made the most of outstanding talent. McKinney represented the mental aspect when she captured the title with the cunning of a chess master. Certainly then Gould represents the physical aspect when she calmly and efficiently destroys anyone in her path to the title. Gould ripped through the final with efficiency that was unbeatable. Controlling the pace from the start she never let Coburn find her groove. The battle lines have been drawn, and Gould stands alone going into the Diet Pepsi National Championships in Baltimore against a multitude of combatants that now have a clear mission.

SEMIS

Gould d. Bailey

11-10, 4-11, 11-6, 11-10

Coburn d. P-Gibson

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

SIXTEENS

Gould d. Evon

11-3, 11-2, 11-2

Levine d. O'Brien

11-2, 11-2, 11-4

Kuhfeld d. Marriot

11-4, 11-5, 11-1

Bailey d. Doyle

11-3, 3-11, 11-5, 11-9

Bevelock d. Galloway

9-11, 11-5, 11-7, 11-3

P-Gibson d. Gudinas

11-3, 11-2, 11-6

Coburn d. Whitmire

11-5, 11-1, 11-6

Crawford d. Drexler

3-11, 11-6, 4-11, 11-10, 11-8

Michelle Gould

11-3, 11-3, 11-4

Lynne Coburn

QUARTERS

Gould d. Levine

11-6, 11-7, 11-4

Bailey d. Kuhfeld

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

P-Gibson d. Bevelock

11-7, 11-2, 11-10

Coburn d. Crawford

6-11, 11-2, 7-11, 11-3, 11-3

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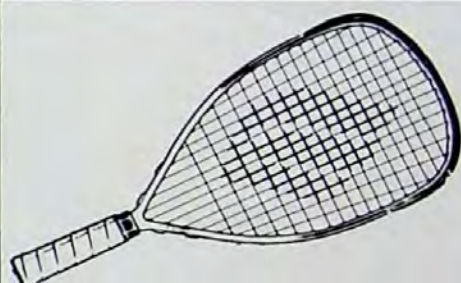
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What's all the **RAK IT** About?

By Woody Clouse

It's Bi Rak It, of course, the newest, fastest growing sport in the country. For those of you who aren't familiar with the game, Bi Rak It, is a sport with a racquet in each hand that can be played on a racquetball court using specially designed racquets. With the racquets being much smaller than standard sized racquetball frames, the demands change drastically.

First and foremost is that power does not distort athleticism. Power is brought into balance with proficiency and shot selection. Second, the need to focus on the ball increases due to racquet design. Third, backhands are not allowed, accomplishing a number of things: a) it forces people to work through a weakness b) you don't hit the ball from a blind side, minimizing the chances of being hit with the racquet, and/or the ball c) due to the no backhand rule the player has to turn his feet prior to swinging, improving footwork. Simply put, the Bi Rak It concept is to use both sides of the body to increase your balance and athletic capabilities.

Kids seem to be naturals, while adults enjoy the challenge. Higher level players are using the game on challenge courts to receive a good work out when playing lower level opponents. Bi Rak It is also the ideal gender bridge due to the reduced emphasis on the power aspect, so it is perfect for both sexes.

Bi Rak It on a racquetball court is only one way to play. It can also be played on the beach, a field, a tennis court, street, or any other place where people can hit a ball at one another. In fact, the squash and ten-

nis forms in the two-handed format add as many interesting twists to those sports as the racquetball version does.

Bi Rak It is historically short but powerful. For the brief amount of time the game has been around, it has taken off incredibly. Over the past four years, the sport has gone from concept to the official

cross-training sport of the International Racquetball Tour. All of the pros play and believe in the concept. Many of the top women players also endorse Bi Rak It and the two top juniors in the country, Sudsy Monchik and Jason Mannino, love the sport with a passion.

As the official cross training sport of the TransCoastal International Racquetball Tour, Bi Rak It is played at every professional event. These matches, along with various others make up the lead in to the Bi Rak It National Championships later this fall. Since the IRT reaches every part of the US and certain areas of Canada and Mexico, most everyone now has an opportunity to experience the excitement in person. Anyone can now compete in the two handed format against some of the best professional athletes in the world and have an opportunity to defeat them.

Such a strong supporting cast, the amount of exposure the IRT is providing for the game, the popularity it is gaining among collegiate players at the recreational level, the benefits for athletic development it provides, the cross gender playability, all combine to make Bi Rak It an legitimate alternative to traditional racquet sports. The physiological benefits that naturally result provide additional benefit. Throw in the constant evolution of the game, which translates into constant improvements, and it becomes easy to see why Bi Rak It is rocking the racquetball world!



Top contender Mike Ray warms up to do battle with former **BI RAK IT** national champ Woody Clouse at the WPRA's Atlanta Pizza Hut Racquetball Challenge. Because of the elimination of much of the power aspect of the game, many of the top female players find it a good arena in which to compete with male players. The Atlanta event is one of the pro events showcasing **BI RAK IT**.

reVision

Evidence indicates that learning a movement with one hand (side) facilitates performance of mirror image movements with the other hand. For example, perfecting movements for the correct swing of a racket with the practiced side creates stimuli that prepare the opposite side for completion of the same task.



In fact, the relatively unused side acts as an amplifier of the weaknesses and strengths of the practiced side. This performance differential is a valuable index for the recognition of subtle flaws in the execution of key movements.

Imagine hitting your best shot for a winner and then imagine doing the same from the opposite side. This accomplishment is a vision of athletic performance in harmony with our physical and mental endowment. It is the essence of **BI RAK IT**.

David Tyson of the host University Club, IRT Commissioner Hank Marcus, current **BI RAK IT** National Champion Ruben Gonzalez, 2nd place Woody Clouse, 3rd place Mike Ray, Dr. Everett McCormick, the father of **BI RAK IT**.

Your past preparation in your chosen sport has placed you on the margin of an effective two-handed offensive arsenal. Entering the comfort zone for performance is a matter of repetition and refinement through competition. It takes less time than you think.

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The Names Behind The Scenes

By Hank Marcus

Commissioner, International Racquetball Tour

Head Anatom Bonus Pool

1. Mike Ray
2. Dave Johnson
3. Bret Harnett
4. Dan Obremski
5. Mike Ceresia
- 6T. Woody Clouse
- 6T. Jason Krikorian
- 8T. Dan Fowler
- 8T. Scott Lipareli
10. Doug Ganim



BI RAK IT Standings

1. Woody Clouse
2. Mike Brady
3. Aaron Katz
- 4T. Mike Ray
- 4T. Vince Kelley
6. Michael Bronfeld
7. John Ellis
8. Egan Inoue
9. Sudsy Monchick
10. Jason Mannino

Penn Glove Bonus Pool

1. Cliff Swain
2. Dave Johnson
3. Woody Clouse
4. Mike Ceresia
5. Roger Harripersad
- 6T. Jason Krikorian
- 6T. Scott Lipareli
- 6T. Dan Fowler
9. Jeff Evans
10. Scott Reiff



It is customary to thank the people involved in any successful venture and this year's International Racquetball Tour was nothing short of fantastic. The quality of play and tournaments, the sponsors and spectators, the clubs and the media; all the components have to come together at each event for success.

Many people ask what is the most important part of the professional tour; the sponsors, the clubs, the tournament directors? The only truthful answer is all of them. None of this could be done without all these supporters. To that end I would like to thank the following people or groups of people that you may not know. You may know their products, their clubs, or have seen their business names and logos throughout the sport; but these are the people behind the scenes who work every day to help build the sport we all love. So in no special order, here they are:

The Players

You should know these guys but I still want to thank them for making my job so easy. If you have never met the professional players, you have missed a great group of athletes and people.

John Delaney

The CEO of TransCoastal Mortgage Corporation who showed the faith and support that helped the IRT grow into a professional sport.

John O'Green, John Horner, Robert Brooks

VCI/VW Credit, Inc. You see this name everywhere in the sport now, including on ESPN this July! These gentlemen make it all possible.

Ed Ray

VCI/VW Credit, Inc. deserves a special thank you from IRT and the sport in general for the contributions and support he has established.

Ektelon: Terri Graham
Penn: Amy Wishingrad
Bi Rak It: Dr. Everett McCormick
Head: Doug Ganim
Leader: Doug Ganim
Hex String: John Wong
Tacki Mac: Doug Smith

All these people have worked hard in support of racquetball and I appreciate their time and professionalism.

The last thank you goes out to maybe the most important group or at least the group I feel the closest to: The tournament directors who give up their lives for four to six months to do everything from painting courts to doing draws to taking out garbage. These people are special and their support, expertise, and caring make them the IRT's most valuable asset.

Thank you to these people and all the others the pros and I have had a chance to meet over the course of a long season. You make it successful, but most of all, you make it fun.

No Strings Attached?

(Part II)

A few tips for checking the quality of your stringer

By John Boudman

The search for quality stringing can be a long and confusing quest. But there are a few key areas to check out the quality of the work on your strings.

Professionalism

There are FEW stringers in any area who have strong stringing experience in all the major racquet sports (Racquetball, Squash, Tennis). Because of that, you should look for a knowledgeable stringer who has a strong background in your specific racquet sport. Today there are over 2000 USRSA certified stringers in the country. You stand a much better chance of getting quality stringing if you take the time to seek out a stringer that cares enough about his/her profession to gain national certification. If you are unaware of a certified professional, call (619) 481-3545 (USRSA) to find out who in your area is certified.

Stringing Consistency.

Consistency is one of the key points you should be trying to find as you look for a regular stringer. A good stringer pays very strict attention to all details of stringing to make sure that each of your racquets will hit and feel exactly the same.

When you are in the stringer's shop, look at the stringing machine, be interested, check to see if the clamps and guide bars are clean. Regular cleaning demonstrates that important attention to detail. Ask how often the machines are calibrated, ask if the stringer keeps records - he or she will need to duplicate your previous stringing tensions to give your racquets consistent play.

Type of Stringing Machine.

What type of stringing machine does your stringer use? Is it a new model, is it a professional machine? Is it a static or constant pull machine? An Ektelon machine is an example of a static pull, a Babolat or Prince is an example of a constant

pull. Ask your stringer. Constant pull (electric) machines will string racquets 12-15% tighter than static pull types. Important knowledge to have.

Remember, your racquet and your game are only as good as your strings, the game is played off the string bed, usually. Spend a little extra time and effort in that area, and you'll be rewarded by a better game.



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Dynamic Duo

Court Position

By Fran Davis & Stu Hastings



One of the most important aspects of the game of racquetball is Court Position. We define proper Court Position as being in the right place at the right time. Racquetball, just like football, basketball, tennis, and soccer (to name a few), relies on good court (field) position to offensively score points and defensively fight off opponents points. Knowing where to be on the court can make the difference between winning or losing a game/match. Too often we see racquetball players running around aimlessly on the court because they are unsure of where to be. Losing a match is too high of a price to pay just because of poor court position.

There is an area on the court (see diagram A) which is a 10' x 10' area we call center court. This ideally is where you want to be as often as possible, during a rally as well as after you serve, because 70% of all balls wind up in this area. Center court is the center of the back half of the court, not at the short line, the real true center of the court.

Your particular position inside this box is determined by the position of the ball, but more importantly the position of your opponent.

The deeper your opponent is on the court, the deeper you are in the box. As your opponent moves up, you move up but very rarely in front of the dotted line (see diagrams B & C). Your opponent has three shots; he can hit a pass, pinch, or kill. By staying deeper you are protecting

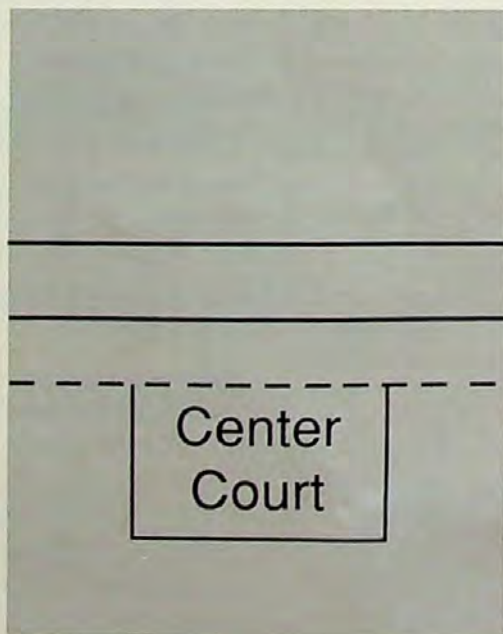
against the pass (a high percentage shot) and giving up the kill and pinch (a lower percentage shot). No one can defend against all three shots so make your opponent beat you with the more difficult shot.

When your opponent is up on or near the dotted line you move back behind them, still remaining in the imaginary box (see diagram D).

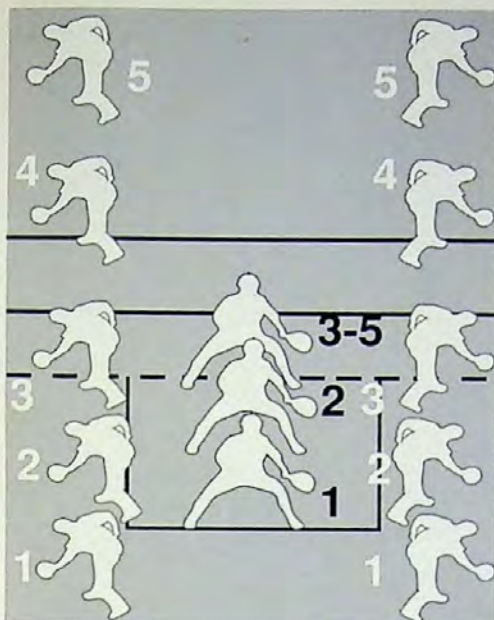
Your feet should be stopped and set, wide power base square to the front wall. You should be down and ready.

Anticipate, but don't commit and move too soon.

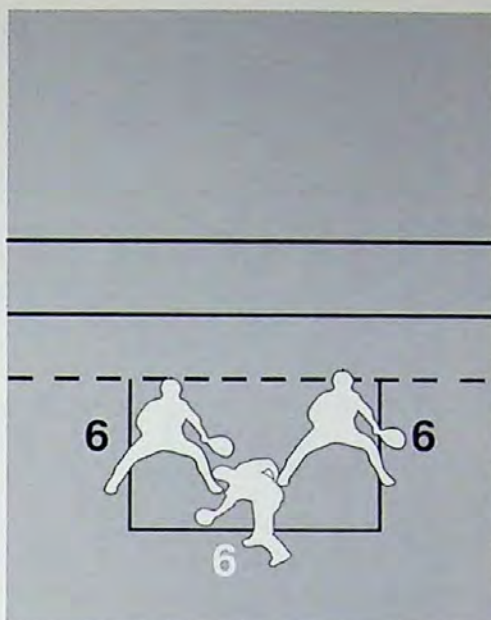
Court position is a critical part of your game. Don't take it lightly and feel your athletic ability can get you to most shots. If you are in the right place at the right time you will have the time to be more efficient and more effective while conserving energy, with better results. Give it a try... it works.



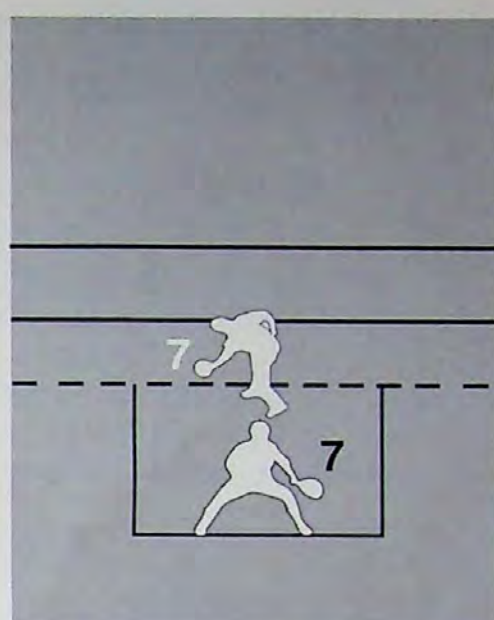
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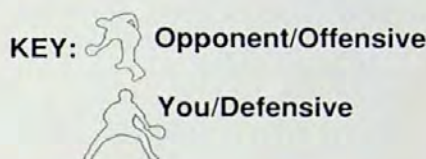
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C



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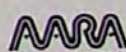
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Gearing-up For Camp

By Steve Strandemo

It's difficult to tell you everything there is to know about racquetball camp in one article, but I can offer a few tips on getting into the proper frame of mind for the best camp experience. As you prepare physically remember to limber up your learning circuits with mental exercises as well. It will make a tremendous difference in your camp performance, and what you get out of it.

Be realistic in setting your goals. The camp staff can't transform your entire game in two to three days, but they can start you in the right direction in the areas of strategy and stroke. Players at camp may make tremendous strides in both areas, but must also realize how much practice it takes to refine their new found skills. With regard to strokes, the staff can't give you a devastating new swing. If you have been playing for any length of time, your swings are basically grooved into your game. A video tape session at camp will show every player his bad habits which can be modified. Many players coming to camp think all their problems will be solved with improved swings. There is more to improving your game than form alone. It is important to learn solid strategy as well.

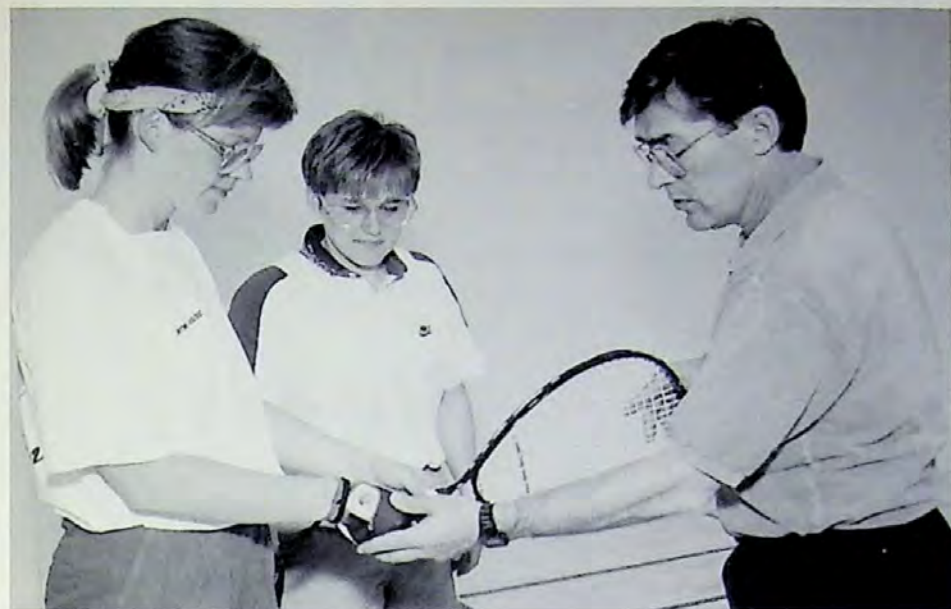
One of the first priorities at my camp is to have participants write down goals, weaknesses, and feelings regarding their game. These goals vary considerably from player to player. One may only be concerned about improving play and keeping fit; another wants to jump from C level to B level, and still another may want to compete effectively on a national level.

Many participants come to camp feeling frustrated with their games. They haven't been able to reach their goals via private lessons, emulation of better players in the area, or "pointers" from friends. They arrive at camp eager for explanations.

Instruction at a well run racquetball camp will be beneficial to your game. It may include your first exposure to racquetball strategy and stroke mechanics. Subtleties of the game are extremely difficult to pick up on your own. Camp participants working with qualified instructors, for concentrated periods of time, will progress much faster. The most constructive use of your instruction time will come from instructor reinforcement and support and encouragement from fellow campers.

There is a natural resistance to trying something new. Remember the first day of school when the algebra books were passed out? Did you leaf through yours and wonder how you would ever learn that stuff? At that point many students have wondered what in the world was wrong with good old arithmetic. Some students approach camp the same way. They developed a game strategy and a couple of shots that always work and they really don't want to change





anything. It is much better to arrive at camp with an open mind realizing that the first steps to a better game may be faltering ones.

Good racquetball is relative. There will be players of all levels and ages at camp. You will play at your own ability level, but will also have the opportunity to meet players from other levels. You will

test yourself against the more advanced players and gain confidence against players who don't have as much experience as you. There is a challenge for every player at camp. You can always learn to do things better and when you have found a good foundation in the game, you can always improve.

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Summer Camp

By Ralph Kusche

Just exactly what should you expect from an instructional camp? This is certainly a fair question to ask when a person is thinking of spending hard-earned dollars and at least a couple of days of what would otherwise be free time. This is all done with the intent of closely scrutinizing your game to determine right from wrong and improve your skills.

Before attending any camp, some basic questions need to be asked. First and foremost, what is the reputation of the instructor? How well accomplished is the instructor in the game? How current is the instruction in relation to today's game? Look for a camp that lends itself to individualized attention. If participation is allowed to reach a high number, that can't possibly happen. Will there be videotape analysis? This may be the most important tool the instructors have to help you. You should get a copy of the tape to help you after the camp. Look for an analysis of your strengths and weaknesses. Finally, if you can't have fun and make new friends, per-

haps you should consider spending your time and money elsewhere. When you get right down to it, if you don't enjoy what you have and hope to do, then your time and money were not invested wisely.

Why will the camp benefit you? Usually, a player is stuck at a certain skill level and doesn't seem to be making any improvement in his game, often due to a lack of fundamentals. This is especially important to someone who is or is contemplating being a tournament competitor. Seek the top active players of today because the game continues to evolve and it is these players who are shaping the future of the sport. An interesting side benefit is that the game becomes more fun because one understands strategy, court positioning, etc. Think of that high school math course. If you had no clue as to what was being taught, you more than likely wanted to be somewhere else doing anything but math. If you did understand, it was fun being able to find the solution to a problem as it was being presented. That is

why a camp, the right camp, can be of tremendous benefit.

Preparation should consist of general physical conditioning, not playing! It is best not to play about a week prior. If you are in a bad groove, playing before camp will only reinforce that negative. Also, the mental break of not playing will aid your concentration for the next 48-72 hours of intense instruction that you should be taking in. If you're injured, let your body rest. You will have ample opportunity to make up for lost playing time.

After the camp is over, you must continue the proper practice drills that are presented. Practicing isn't as much fun as playing but it is the surest way to improve. Practice the strokes, footwork and court positioning you have learned. Remember the positive critiquing. Tell yourself, "Hey, I'm good with drive serves, but if I can develop an effective lob, I'll be that much better." The camp instructors can't magically transform your game if knowledge is not transferred to application.

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Growth Spurt in the WPRA

By Dee Ferreira-Worth

President, Women's Professional Racquetball Association

I was told that there are some women on the tour who are getting tired of hearing about all the babies being born to the players. It was told to me that it seems that we have been focusing on the pregnancies rather than playing. My answer to that is simple. The playing on the tour is, of course, much more important than the personal lives of some of our players, but you have to admit, it is interesting. After all, in the last few years it seems that we have had quite a growth spurt. I want to write one more time about pregnancy and racquetball because it seems that many people think that you can't mix the two. Well, guess again; you can.

I have known many people who have played racquetball on the competitive level while they were pregnant, some even lasting until the day prior to delivery. Most stop when the discomfort outweighs the joy of playing which is a different point for each woman. There are many obstacles that the pregnant woman faces when she plays racquetball, and the toughest one is the disapproval of others.

So many uninformed people believe that playing racquetball while pregnant will somehow hurt the baby. They get downright hostile about it. While you wouldn't dream of participating in any activity while pregnant without your doctor's approval, for the most part in a normal, uneventful pregnancy, playing racquetball is not only safe, it is beneficial!

While you are pregnant, you basically have no control of your life. Exercise gives you back some control. You can more easily control your weight, lessen the discomfort caused by poor circulation, keep toned for the important delivery and have some fun. What is really amazing is that your game seems to get better.

You have to play differently when you are pregnant. You do less running and more shooting. You are more aware of where your opponent is, and must hit shots that count in order to stay in the game.

You are also lower to the ground, so you seem to hit lower shots. You learn new aspects of the game that you never needed before, and I am told you retain all of this and therefore it makes your overall game better.

The current philosophy of doctors today is that if you were doing a certain exercise prior to pregnancy, keep on doing it. You should do what you normally do as long as you feel up to it. There are, of course, certain guidelines. You don't want your body to get overheated. You should drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after. And, don't get too tired. (For those who like to dive, I would also suggest refraining from that) Make sure that your doctor is informed and follow his or her advice.

I played my last tournament at exactly nine months along which was the Western Regionals and managed to take second place. The woman I played in the finals had played through three pregnancies and knew what my weak spots were. Many people were amazed, some were disapproving, but, for the most part, people were happy that I had the guts to wear spandex and a shorty top in my ninth month.

The best advice I can give to pregnant players is to check with your doctor before deciding to continue playing. Wear clothing that gives you enough breathing room and support and make sure that you do not play with any wild players. Racquetball during pregnancy has allowed me to keep my sanity these last nine months and I am certain that it will do the same for any other player.

As for the WPRA, it seems that more and more of us are mixing racquetball and motherhood. This adds yet another dimension to the women who play on the tour. We are not just athletes, or wives, or friends, or sisters, or career women, or students, we are a mixture of all of this. The women on the tour prove time and time again, *You can have it all.*

Penn Pro Series

1. Michelle Gould
2. Malia Bailey
3. Marci Drexler
4. Kaye Kuhfeld



Editor's Note: Riley Shannon Worth was born to Dee and Kelly Worth on May 7th. Congratulations!



Darwinian Racquetball

The Evolution of the Racquet

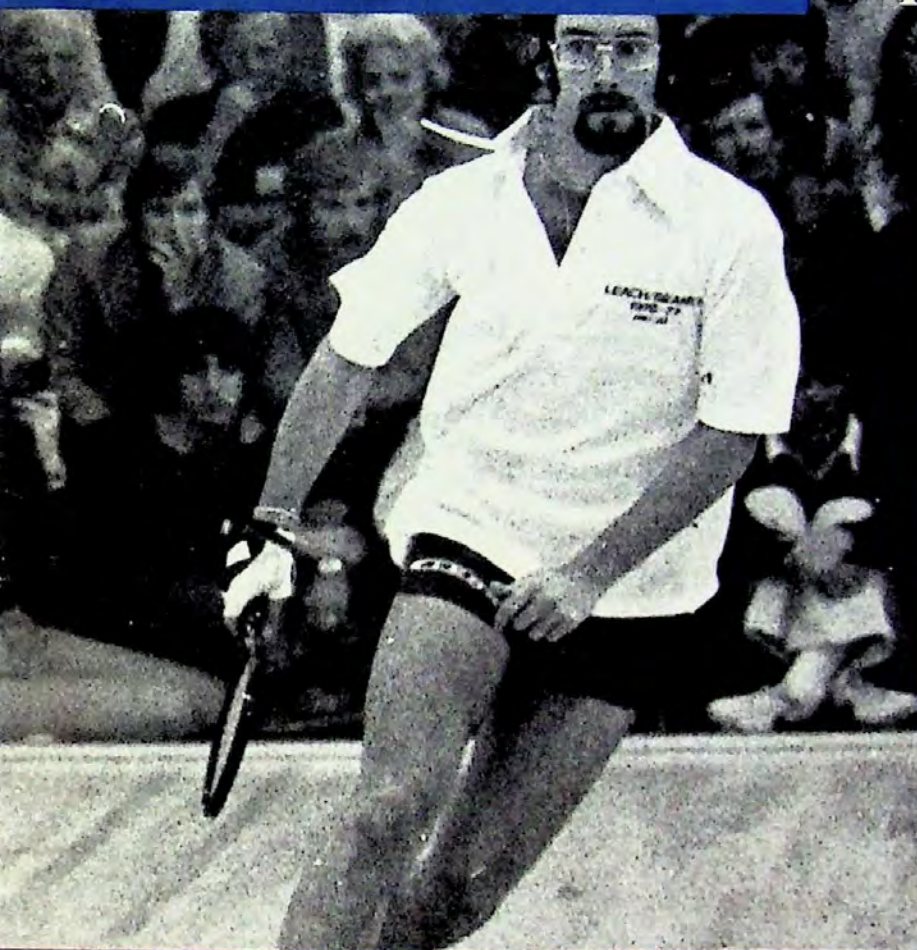


Photo 1: Whether he began by chipping the handle off his tennis racquet (as legend has it) or not (as historians say), Joe Sobek invented "Paddle Rackets". One of these earliest frames bears his name and the Paddle Rackets logo, the other is designated "P.S.G."

Photo 2: In the 1970's a new company called Ektelon introduced the first aluminum frame. The first, here, is the *Bud Muehleisen Signature*.

Photo 3: Also in the 1970's gave rise to the fiberglass composite frames shown here. Much lighter and more accurate than wood, Marty Hogan's *Leach Bandido* (not pictured) aided Marty in changing the sport forever. Pictured here are the *Starmaster Hank Marcus Signature* (standing), the *Spalding Top Flight* (top), and the *Wilson Davey Bledsoe Autograph* (bottom).





Photo 1: Aluminum frames were everywhere. Shown here are a battered Voit (without logo) from the *Impact* series (standing), and a typical Spalding aluminum (front).

Photo 2: Here is the most recognizable aluminum racquet for about a decade, the top-of-the-line Ektelon *Magnum* (standing). Also pictured here are the Head *Standard* -often called the "Red Head"- (top), and the Spalding *Smasher* (bottom).

Photo 3: Some very interesting frames emerged from this period as well. The *Sentra Nightstick* (standing) had a curved handle. The Head *Competition* (front) was composite sandwiched between aluminum plates with a wrap-around bumper and grommet system. The Omega *Mad Rac* series (not pictured) used a unique diagonal string pattern.

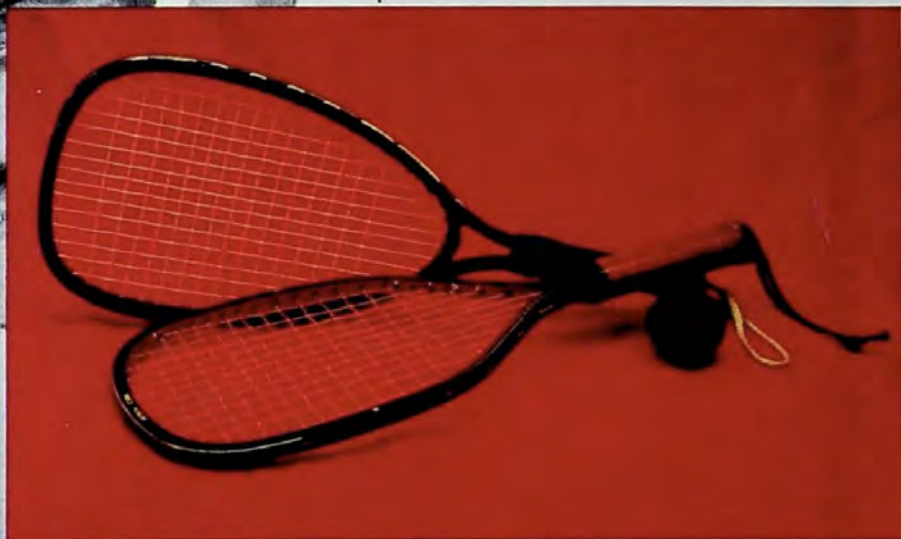


Photo 1: The age of graphite composite arrived in the late 1970's and early 1980's. More power and better feel made graphite the material of choice for years to come. Three super popular frames pictured here are the Leach *Graphite Bandido* (standing), the Head *Graphite Express* (top), and the Ektelon 250G (bottom).

Photo 2: As the 1980's progressed, more and more graphite appeared. A new company called Pro Kennex pulled Marty Hogan away from D.P. Leach, not for a signature racquet, but as an integral part of the company. Hogan's name would be on the entire line. Shown here is a graphite composite model from that line (standing). Ektelon's *CBK* (front) was named for its Carbon (graphite), Boron, and Kevlar content.

Photo 3: A bold move playing on the success of bigger and bigger racquet faces in tennis, Ektelon introduced the "Macro" series of the first oversized frames during the 1984-1985 season. More gets and increased sweet spot for increased velocity made them a controversial hit. Pictured here is the *Contra*.





Photo 1: Frame width became the variable as new materials merged with big frames. Ektelon made their new big frames wider at the top and called it *RTS* for Racquetball Taper System (not pictured). Head introduced a predominately wide-bodied frame called the *Elite* (standing) that quickly became one of the country's most popular frames in the late 1980's. The young Richcraft company entered the market with the narrow and grometless *Mirage* (front).

Photo 2: Combining bold neon colors and a wide body, Egan Inoue and company at E Force in Hawaii launched a new line that started with the *Signature* shown here.

Photo 3: Always a consistent producer of reliable quality frames but often hesitant about innovation, Spalding pushed the envelope of racquet technology in the 1990 season by raising the area of the string bed to create *The Assault*. An immediate success, *The Assault* showed up in the Mike Ray used to win the 1991 TransCoastal Grand National.



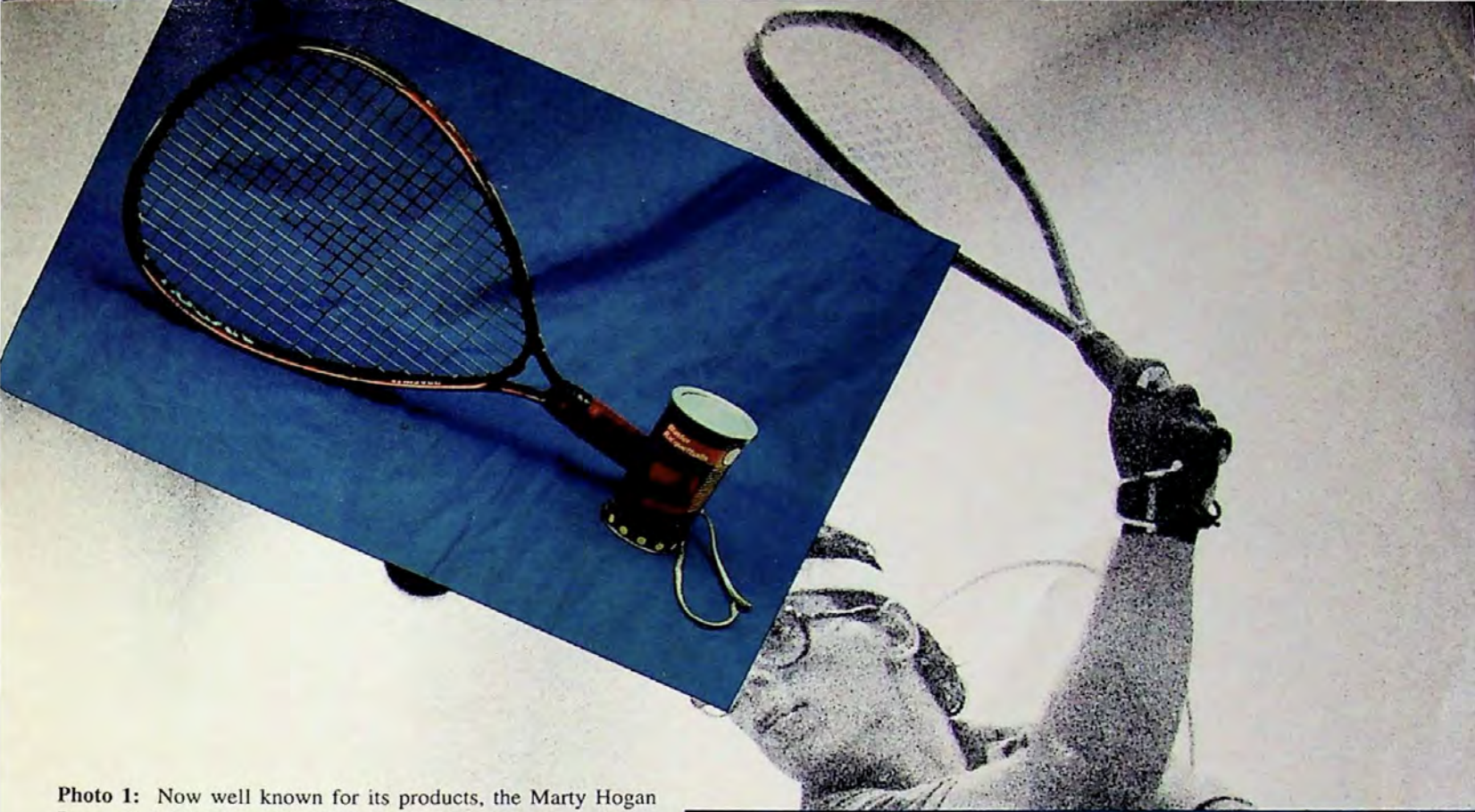


Photo 1: Now well known for its products, the Marty Hogan Racquetball Division of Pro Kennex introduced an unusual concept in 1991 with the asymmetrical frame. The *ASM 31* shown is wide at the top and narrow at the bottom on one side of the frame, while wide at the bottom and narrow at the top on the opposing side.

Photo 2: Wilson has produced good racquets for the recreational player since the beginnings of the game. In 1992 Wilson brought the *Hammer* concept so successful in tennis to racquetball for its first real high-end frame with the *Hammer 2.7* (standing). It is wide at the base and narrows toward its top. Estca also borrowed technology from its sister company Estusa in tennis with its all round body *Protech* (front).

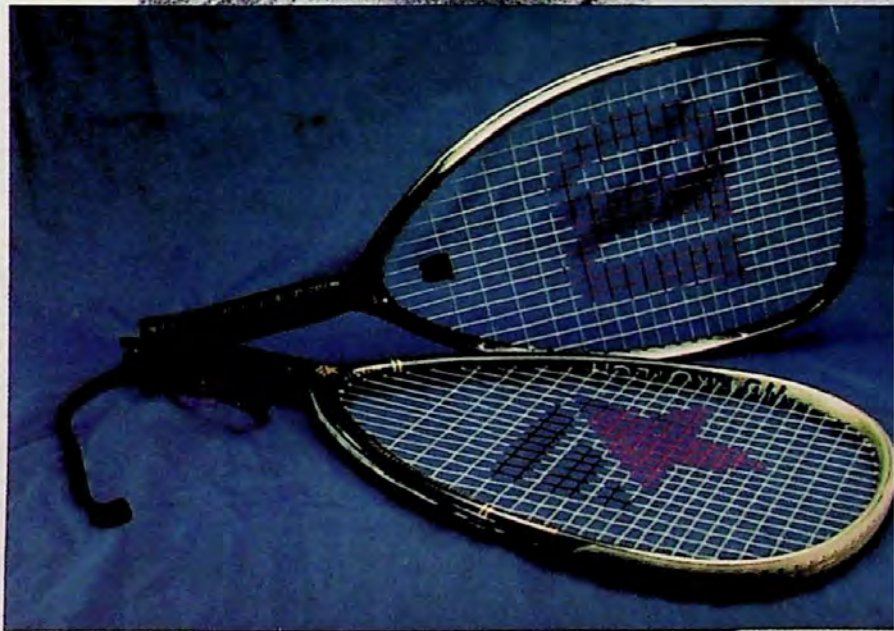
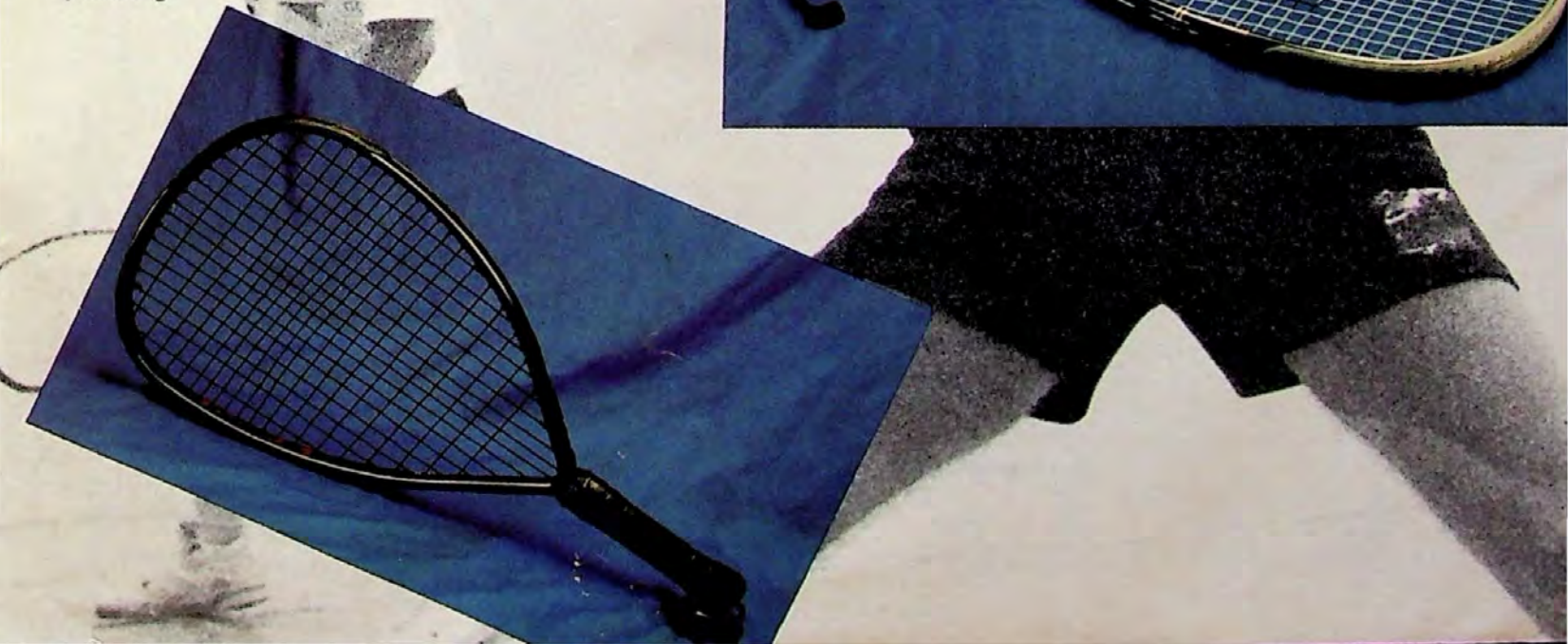


Photo 3: Transition Racquet Sports' 1992 innovation, *The Bad Influence*, is the first Racquetball frame to arrive from the factory unstrung.



Tennis Elbow Revisited

Another look at one of racquetball's bitter enemies

By Richard A. Honaker, M.D., P.A.

The condition commonly known as tennis elbow is known by the medical term lateral epicondylitis. It is a common problem that often takes weeks and months to resolve.

The muscles in the forearm that bend the wrist back attach to the bony prominence on the outside and inside of the elbow. That bony prominence is called the lateral epicondyle. Repeated forceful use of these particular muscles results in chronic pulling at the site of the tendon attachment to the bone. This results in micro-tears of the tendon and inflammation where it joins the bone. The pain may radiate up or down the arm and may be worse when shaking hands or gripping.

Lateral epicondylitis is often caused from poor backhand technique (for example, hitting the ball while the weight is on the rear foot), improper serving with too much force (and possibly too much wrist), and a late forehand stroke. The importance of proper technique to prevent this problem is underscored by the low incidence of tennis elbow in professional players. Improper equipment, incorrect grip size, strings which are too tight or string tension imbalance can also cause the problem. Jerky strokes and poor ball contact can also be a factor.

The treatment of tennis elbow involves temporarily resting the arm for as long as two weeks. Ice applied three times a day for one hour in the early painful stage and for fifteen minutes after active use of the arm may be helpful. Stretching exercises may help prevent stiffness during the healing phases and break down scar tissue. Anti-inflammatory medications which may be prescribed will result in

more rapid improvement. In resistant cases, localized cortisone injections may be needed to reduce the inflammation. Physical therapy is often used and appropriate muscle strengthening may be beneficial. Many different types of wrist braces and elbow braces may be used. They work by reducing the pull on the tendon at the inflamed site. Surgery is only indicated in rare cases.

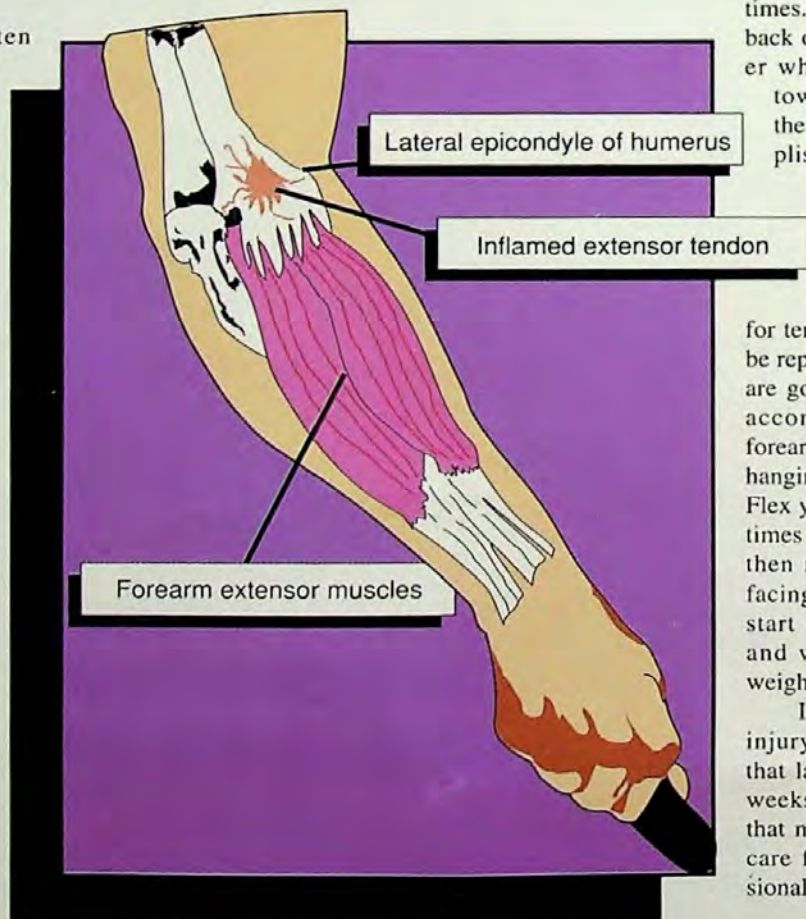
To help your tennis elbow heal and prevent further problems, your backhand serve should be powered with your legs and upper body and shoulder muscles, and less so with the forearm and wrist. Your grip size should be comfortable. Racquets

with dampening of the vibration are best. Racquet stringing to a couple of pounds below the manufacturer's minimum recommended tension is also helpful.

To strengthen the forearm muscles and balance them correctly, squeezing a racquetball 50 times with your arm extended horizontally in front of you may be helpful. This should be repeated four times daily. Working up to larger size balls, such as a tennis ball, should occur if improvement is noted.

Wrist stretching is accomplished best by placing the palms together, raising the elbows and pushing the hands together for ten seconds. This should be repeated ten times. This is also done with the back of the hands pushed together while lowering the elbows toward the floor. Stretching the forearm muscles is accomplished by sitting on a stool, resting your arm on a table and with the opposite hand, pulling your other hand up to a 45 degree angle and holding for ten seconds. This should also be repeated ten times. Wrist curls are good strengthening exercises accomplished by laying your forearm on a table with the hand hanging over the edge, palm up. Flex your wrist approximately 20 times with a five pound weight, then repeat this with the palm facing down. It may be best to start with a one pound weight and work up to a five pound weight.

Initially, try to treat this injury yourself. But for a case that lasts more than a couple of weeks and does not respond to that much rest, it is time to seek care from a health care professional.



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