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RACQUETBALL

ILLUSTRATED

MARCH 1982

Vol. 5, No. 3

FEATURES

- 14 **FRIENDS ON THE COURT** Television stars Andrew Stevens and Donna Dixon take time off from shooting for a day of racquetball. *By Charles Warn*
- 20 **TWO MARTINOS STRAIGHT UP** No sibling rivalry here. Mark and Laura Martino have each other's interests at heart. *By Mike Snapp*
- 24 **LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON** There may be a father-son doubles team better than Burt and Mark Morrow, but don't bet on it. *By Charlie Brittain*
- 40 **RELAXATION FOR RACQUETBALL** Basic techniques to improve your play on the court. *By Robert L. Morasky, Ph.D.*
- 42 **HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR OWN TOURNAMENT** Planning your own tournament is not that hard if you know what to do. *By Rhonda Wilson*
- 50 **WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM OTHER SPORTS** Taking bits and pieces from other sports can improve your racquetball in ways you've never thought of. *By Mark Kessinger*



20



42

INSTRUCTION

- 27 **Doubles** by Brad Kruger
- 30 **Mixed Doubles** by Charles Garfinkel
- 32 **Exercises For Couples**
- 35 **Tools For The Novice** by Susan C. Lipnickey
- 36 **Court Tactics** by Marty Hogan



32

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 **Up Front**
- 6 **Players**
- 10 **Court Memories**—The Big Money Hands vs. Racquet Challenge by Charles Brumfield with Mike Hogan
- 12 **Short Shots**
- 45 **Rx For Winning**—Self-Defense with a Racquet by Tak Kubota
- 48 **Tournaments**—Schoeber's Classic
- 54 **College Courts**
- 59 **Club News**
- 61 **Service Box**
- 62 **Off The Wall**



45

UP FRONT



JUSTICE FOR ALL

In the tournament section of this month's issue there is a report on the \$10,000 Schoeber's Classic from Pleasanton, Calif. It's not one of the major events of the season but in a lot of ways it illustrates the inequities of the men's professional racquetball situation.

For those of you who have joined us late, the bulk of the men's pro tour is being sponsored by Catalina. But this year, unlike the past, the tour was limited to 12 regulars and two alternates. The other players were left to fend for themselves, which means they had to play in smaller, less lucrative and less prestigious events.

Since December was an off month for the Catalina tour regulars, many of them traveled to the San Francisco Bay Area for the annual Schoeber's tourney. In fact, the top five seeds were Catalina players Jerry Hilecher, Rich Wagner, Bret Harnett, Craig McCoy and Scott Hawkins. It is interesting to note that none of the five made it to the finals and only one, Harnett, even made it to the semis.

The event was won by Ed Andrews, who defeated Mark Martino in the finals. Neither Andrews nor Martino were invited to participate on the Catalina tour.

The Catalina tour organizers have never claimed they chose the top 14 players. All they have advertised is they have "14 of the top players." But the point we are trying to make here is not which "top" players should be invited and which "top" players should be left out. The point is that there is enough depth in men's racquetball to open up the pro tour. Andrews and Martino as well as several other players around the country have basically been locked out of professional racquetball. They deserve a chance to try and make a career out of the sport. If they can't make a career out of it, it will soon become apparent to them if they keep losing. But it should be their decision, not the decision of an outside source that keeps them from getting that chance.

Let's hope the people associated with the Catalina tour—the most professionally run tour the sport has seen—reevaluate their position next season and open the door for others to play.

This issue's theme is "Racquetball for Two." Our instruction section has articles on doubles, mixed doubles and exercises for couples. Our feature section has stories on brother and sister Mark and Laura Martino, father and son Burt and Mark Morrow and friends Donna Dixon (*Bosom Buddies*) and Andrew Stevens (*Code Red*).

We also have a story on "How To Plan A Tournament," which brings up an important point: it is the responsibility of the tournament director or organizer to send the results to the racquetball magazines and local media. *Racquetball Illustrated* runs at least one paragraph of results for each tournament it receives. But we can't print anything unless we see it and we usually don't see it unless someone physically places the results (first and last names and scores of the finals) in an envelope and places a stamp on it. In short, we won't even know your tournament exists unless you tell us.

Ben Kalb
Editor

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SIDE OUT

HANDICAPPED WATERSKIERS

I read with interest Charlie Brittain's article "Playing While Handicapped" which featured Marcia Nave (December 1981). I was most interested in her admirable accomplishments, but found myself surprised at the very last line in the article which read: "Except waterski, maybe, that's a real toughie."

I recently wrote an in-depth piece on handicapped water skiers which might be of interest to Marcia. We not only have amputee skiers, but mentally retarded enthusiasts as well as blind performers. If Marcia or any other handicapped racquetball player would like more information on this exciting sport and their opportunities in it, I'd be most happy to send a copy of our publication and get them in contact with someone who could help.

Wanda Smith
Managing Editor
World Waterskiing Magazine
Winter Park, Fla.

WRIST THONG

I am presently representing a young man, 26 years old, who is legally blind in one eye as a result of an injury sustained during a racquetball game. However, his injury is not from a ball as you might expect, but because his opponent's racquet became detached from the wrist thong during play. Several executives of the racquet company have stated under oath that the wrist thong is not made for safety, but merely to prevent a player from changing hands during a game (which is prohibited by rule). Needless to say, this position is contrary to practically everything written about the subject.

I should mention that I have contacted other racquetball organizations about this matter but they apparently felt it was not worthy of their attention.

Phil Breaux
Attorney at Law
St. Gabriel, La.

VERSATILITY

I have enjoyed your magazine for a couple of years. The only negative thing I can think of is all the rhetoric in your Side Out section about your cover shots. I have yet to dwell on the cover. I am interested in what is between the covers. You are to be commended on your topic selections and versatility. Keep up the good work.

Chris Jacobson
Rancho Cordova, Calif.

Send letters to:
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"SEXIST CARTOON"

My husband and I just received the January issue of *Racquetball Illustrated*. This is the first issue we've received under our new subscription. We're novice players, and we looked around for a worthy racquetball magazine to subscribe to. We saw your December issue and liked it so we subscribed. But, before we sent our check in we looked for two things: good quality writing, and an absence of sexism. So what happens when we receive the January issue? An appearance of sexism.

I refer to the cartoon on page 54. I didn't laugh—not many women would, none should. I asked myself if this were a take-off on the movie, *The Apartment*, when Jack Lemmon was straining spaghetti with his tennis racquet. Now that was funny—because the character Lemmon played knew what he was doing. Look at the female in the cartoon. She looks dimwitted and unconcerned about the use of a racquet to flip a pancake. Now, really is this supposed to be funny?

I refer now to the other cartoon on page 11. I find no sexism in this cartoon. I laughed. Sure, it's absurd—a shark in the jacuzzi—but the funny part is that jacuzzis always seem to be closed for one reason or the other, at least at the club we belong to. The male figure isn't much to look at, true, but the focus is on the shark—and it's not his fault the shark is in the jacuzzi. There's an obvious difference in these cartoons.

I'll admit people are funny to look at but people don't do funny things based on their gender. If the cartoon had portrayed a male using a racquet to jack his car up I wouldn't have laughed either.

Lee P. Longo
Euclid, Ohio

RUNNING SHOES

Sherron Boyea (January 1981), may be a great long jumper and she may become a national racquetball champion someday but she'll never do it wearing those shoes she had on in the photos. Doesn't she know the difference between racquetball shoes and running shoes? Running shoes could cause injuries if used on a racquetball surface.

Deborah Little
Tucson, Ariz.

CHILDREN'S SECTION

We want to commend you on the Special Children's Section in your January issue. The article on "How to Get Children Interested in Racquetball" will be saved in our household for a few years—until our son gets old enough to have his own racquet. He's now three years old and we figure to put him on the court in another two years or so.

We also enjoyed the color illustration that went with that story, and the feature article on 12-year-old Matt Rudich.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Davis
Portland, Ore.

INSTRUCTION

I want to say that I think your instruction section is improving with each issue. The articles in your January issue were the best collection except for your periodic instruction guides.

I was especially glad to see the color shots of Marty Hogan going through the backhand process. The Hogan instruction series is intelligent, which is more than I can say for some of the other articles that have been passed off as instruction over the years.

James Dunphy
Ann Arbor, Mich.



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PLAYERS



When not filming, you can usually find the cast of NBC's *Hill Street Blues* at your nearby racquetball club. Regular players include (from left) Ed Marinaro, Jim Sikking, Betty Thomas and Bruce Weitz.



The show even manages to go on the court during filming. Here, Veronica Hamel, a converted tennis player, rolls out a backhand in a scene shot at Racquetball World in Canoga Park, Calif. Hamel plays attorney Joyce Davenport in *Hill Street Blues*.

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COURT MEMORIES

The Big Money Hands vs Racquet Challenge

BY CHARLIE BRUMFIELD
WITH MIKE HOGAN

Racquetball wasn't always the sissy game it is today. In the old days, every match was a test of physical stamina and endurance.

We had wooden racquets which weren't great for racquetball but proved very handy in post-match fights, a ball so slow that it stayed in play for 15 or 20 shots per rally and tournament finals between two players who had hangovers from the previous night's party. It was two out of three games to 21 or the player left standing after leg cramps set in.

You had to be tough just to get to a court past the handball players. Most courts were designated handball courts, and the handball players didn't like "a bunch of sissies with racquets" taking up their court time and marking up their walls.

These were very tough guys, and some of them played as if going to the blood bank. You either picked up a pint or left one behind. Handball players enjoyed making unfriendly insinuations about the sexual preferences of racquetball players. We would come back with remarks about them wiping their noses on their sweatshirt sleeves (they all wore sweatshirts with the sleeves cut off at the shoulders).

The culmination of all this good fellowship was a January 1972 grudge match—hands versus racquet—between handball champ Paul Haber of Chicago and racquetball champ Dr. Bud Muehleisen of San Diego. It was played at Memphis State University, a handball was used, and although there was no prize money involved, members of the handball and racquetball fraternities made bets totaling \$30,000.

Haber was a member of the kamikaze school of handball. He became a national handball champion by being not only one of the cagiest players in the game but also one of the toughest. He was always ready to put his body on the line. Whenever he went after a shot, it was as if the wall weren't there. Of course, the wall usually was there, so Haber always looked as though he had just undergone plastic surgery.

Muehleisen was the greatest court general in racquetball. He has won more national racquetball titles than any other player. He was my teacher and long-time doubles partner and I can't remember having ever lost a game while we played together. In fact, I don't think we ever had more than 14 points scored against us in any one game.

The other important thing to know about Dr.



Racquetball champion Dr. Bud Muehleisen went up against handball champ Paul Haber in a 1972 grudge match at Memphis State University.

Bud is that he was probably the finest naturally conditioned athlete I have ever seen. He wasn't muscular, but he was in great shape, which had made him uniquely suited to take on a guy such as Haber.

I'll never forget that first time I met him. It was 1965 at a paddleball tourney at the Kona Kai Club in San Diego. A lot of racquetball players came off the paddleball tour. I was this snot-nosed kid from San Carlos, California, and I had heard about what was going on down at the Kona Kai Club and thought to myself, "Hey, I'm pretty hot. I'm gonna go down and play Dr. Bud."

At the time there were two courts. One was a glass viewing court and the other was a kind of dungeon in the back where no one could see you. In those days, no one knew

who anyone else was. No one had a reputation except Dr. Bud.

No one knew me, so naturally, I was playing all my matches back in this shoebox while Dr. Bud played through the draw on the exhibition court.

Somehow I made the finals against him. I had never seen him play, but I walk in and here is this blond guy dressed all in white with white shoes and a white glove. Meanwhile, I'm in my Converse high top sneakers and old gym shorts and my glasses are broken after diving for a shot and held on my head with a shoelace.

So I went up to Ben Press, the head tennis pro there at the time, and asked him, "Well, what's Bud's weakness?"

He thinks a little while and then says, "Bud

tires after seven hours."

I played the guy and I couldn't believe it. I had never run so much in my life and Bud was about 40 years old at this time. I used to make my living giving guys "a tour of the court," but I couldn't do that to Bud. We'd play these long games in which my whole body slowly cramped up into a pretzel shape, and I would look over at Bud and he would have this small, token patch of sweat on his shirt.

So what you have in Dr. Bud is a perfect racquetball player from a mental and physical standpoint. Frankly, it didn't look as if Haber had much of a chance. No one had ever played hands vs. racquets before. Even *Sports Illustrated* sent reporter Dan Levin to cover it. Muehleisen had predicted that he would take Haber 21-8 and 21-12, and at first, it went pretty much his way. He made Haber explore every nook and cranny of that court, the hard way.

Haber was getting really frustrated and I'm this all-time vocal rooter up there screaming and yelling for Bud. Finally, Haber gets so ticked off that he takes the gum out of his mouth and throws it at me. I catch it and hand it to one of the big-knuckled guys wearing a striped suit in from Chicago, and say, "Here's a souvenir." Dr. Bud wins the first game, 21-14, and on his way out of the court, he winks at Levin as if to say, "See, it's all going according to plan." It would be the last time he celebrated that day.

After that, Haber slowed the game down to a snail's pace. Dr. Bud hadn't generated any

sweat, so Haber did everything he could to stall between every point. His 30-second time-outs all lasted 10 or 15 minutes. He changed his glove 20 times a game. If a kid cried or someone walked into the gallery, he would stop and wait until the "distraction stopped."

He also intimidated the referee. He disputed every call, browbeat the ref, swore at him, threw a ball at him and was never called for a technical.

They were playing with a handball, which is smaller and harder than a racquetball, and that negated the power that Bud might have had from the use of a racquet. The ball would always stay in play and Haber would slam into the wall, dive, run, jump and do somersaults to reach it.

Haber won the second game 21-15 and was up 17-0 in the third when Dr. Bud rallied to make it 20-16. At match point, as Haber was going for a shot he reached way back and brushed Muehleisen's shirt with his fingers. He demanded an avoidable hinder and got it from the intimidated ref.

That was point, game and match, upon which all of Haber's henchmen rushed in and carried him around on their shoulders. He was bleeding from both arms and knees.

A few months later, in relative privacy and with no money on the table, and no *Sports Illustrated* writers on hand, Muehleisen avenged the defeat by winning two straight games from Haber. But it was anti-climactic. Haber had won the one that counted. **R**



Charlie Brumfield: An eyewitness.

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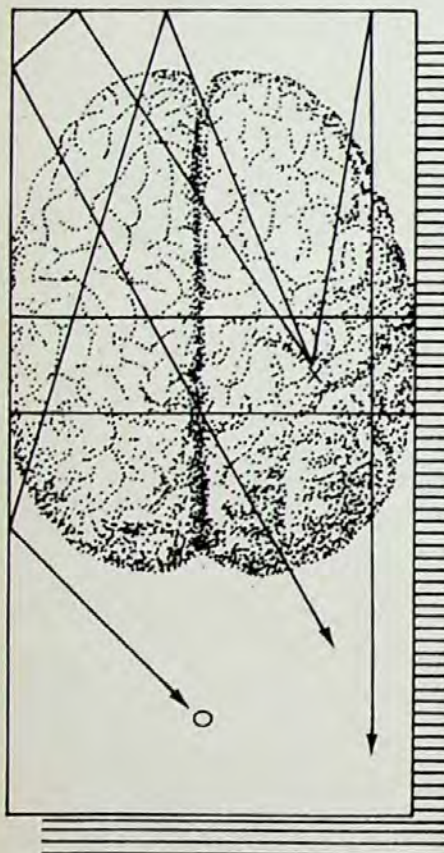
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SHORT SHOTS

BACK ON THE COURT

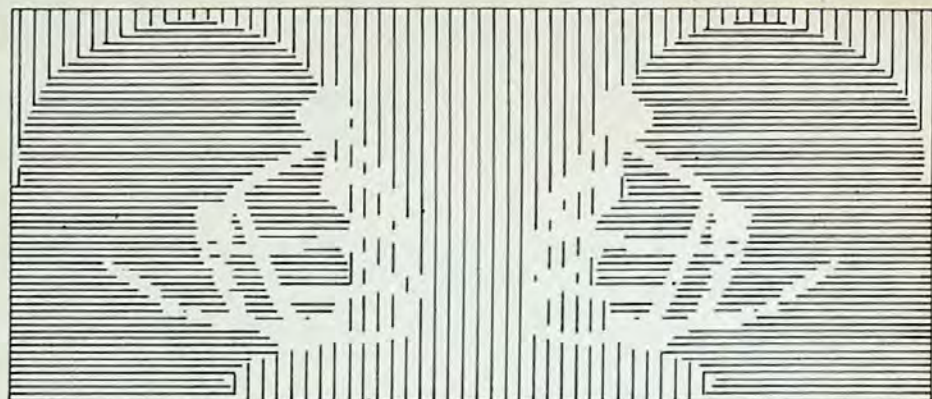
According to Lon Dunckelman, owner of Racquetball West in West Monroe, La., racquetball was a major factor in his speedy recovery from a brain seizure.

Dunckelman, 59, had been playing racquetball at least twice a week for the past three years but in mid-October he was forced to stop playing after doctors discovered he had a tumor on the right lobe of his brain and an operation was necessary. Although the operation was successful, Dunckelman temporarily lost the use of his left arm and left leg.



Dunckelman is on a therapy program which includes exercise, working with weight machines and racquetball. "I was beginning to have withdrawal symptoms," said Dunckelman. "You just can't quit racquetball after doing it as long as I have."

Dunckelman went back on the court with a "lightweight skater's helmet" and says he has improved his backhand tremendously. "I instructed the surgeon to put in a super backhand when he had my skull open," says Dunckelman. "So my opponents better watch out when I get my game together again."



FOOTBALL TALK

What do professional football coaches talk to each other about on weekly phone calls? Why racquetball, of course.

When Washington Redskins head coach Joe Gibbs calls San Diego Chargers head coach Don Coryell they usually don't talk much football.

"We usually talk about racquetball," Gibbs told the *Los Angeles Times*.

"Neither of us had any time to play during the season, and we decided that we are both going to try to play at least once a week during the season next year."

Gibbs, a former Charger assistant to Coryell, has won several tournaments. Coryell formerly owned a racquetball club.

THE INSTRUCTION SHOW

The Federal Way (Wash.) Athletic Club in conjunction with Thousand Trails, a company that markets recreational property around the United States, is bringing in some of the top racquetball pros in the country to give clinics and exhibitions to its members.

The nine-session series will be filmed and eventually edited into a 25-30 minute instruction show designed for the cable television market.

Committed to appear are Steve Keeley, Charlie Brumfield, Marci Greer, Fran Davis, Lynn Adams, Dave Peck, Steve Strandemo, Steve Dunn and Dr. Bud Muehleisen. Brumfield is also set to do the film voiceover.

"I think this is the first time one club has brought in this many top players in this short a period of time (three months)," says Jerry Henderson, who helped organize the clinic.

Each of the instructors will give two clinics—one in the afternoon and one in the evening—and then play an exhibition.

Each instructor is scheduled to give a presentation on a different subject. Subjects to be covered include stroke fundamentals, cerebral racquetball, serving, doubles, women's racquetball and racquetball on the run.

"I plan to make this an annual event," says Henderson.

BONUS POOL

The Women's Professional Racquetball Association (WPRA) has arranged a \$13,150 bonus pool for players who wear Nike shoes in WPRA sanctioned tournaments.

The pool will be based on final rankings. The top finisher will receive \$5,000, the runner-up \$3,000, and the number three player \$1,500. The next three finishers will each receive \$750 and seventh through 10th place players will each get \$350.

The pool evidently is not open to players who have contracts with other shoe manufacturers.

SHORTER SHOTS

VHD Programs has announced that pro Steve Strandemo has signed a contract to provide an instruction program for the videodisk market.

Jim Stiger, 40, a running back for the Los Angeles Rams and Dallas Cowboys in the 1960s, died in Lompoc, Calif. while playing a game of racquetball. His death is one of the few ever reported from playing racquetball.

Macgregor Athletic Products of East Rutherford, N.J. has acquired Seamco, makers of racquetballs, handballs, paddleballs, racquets and bags. Bob Smith will assume the position of general manager.

FOR KIDS ONLY

In the interest of encouraging children to take up racquetball, the American Amateur Racquetball Association has modified the rules for players eight-years-old and younger.

The eight-and-under rules made a big hit at the South Bay Junior Racquetball Classic at the West End Racquet Club in Torrance, Calif. when five-year-old Kirk Loveday, grandson of racquetball coach Carl Loveday, made his racquetball debut against seven-year-old Amanda Wilson (see photo). Amanda won the first two matches in two straight games but Kirk finally got the hang of it and won the third exhibition match two games to one.

The following is a list of rules for 8-under competition:

1. After a legal serve, the receiver may let the ball bounce as many times as he or she wants but will only get one swing at returning the ball.
2. The ball may be hit during a rally at any time but if it is played off the back

wall, the player cannot cross the short line to hit it (The only exception is if the ball hits the back wall on a fly and rebounds all the way into front court).

3. For more serious players, lines on the front wall have been added three feet off the ground and one foot off the ground. If the ball hits below the three-foot line and above the one-foot line, it has to be returned before it bounces the third time. If the ball hits below the one-foot line during a rally, it must be returned to the front wall before it bounces twice.

This encourages younger players to keep the ball low.

4. Players can also add a dividing line from the short line to the back wall if they desire. This will divide the court into forehand and backhand sectors. A ball hit in the forehand sector must be returned with a forehand and a ball hit into the backhand sector must be hit with a backhand.

5. Games are usually played best two out of three to 11 points.

PHOTO BY MILO MUSUN



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DONNA DIXON AND ANDREW STEVENS: FRIENDS ON THE COURT

BY CHARLES WARN

They both epitomize a widely shared version of the American Dream: young and sexy, rich and famous. On this day they begin another day of living that dream with a spirited session of racquetball.

At 154 pounds, Andrew Stevens says he is feeling fat and in need of the workout. Although the women present dispel any such notion of corpulence with their admiring looks, he attacks the game with the same intensity that has made the 26-year-old native of Memphis, Tenn. one of the most successful young actors in Hollywood.

His opponent is no less effective, but the form is very different. She is Donna Dixon, a Marilyn Monroe for the '80s.

Make no mistake about this lady—she has that special quality that sets her apart from other blonde beauties who have followed the yellow brick road to the California dream of stardom. Three years out of her Alexandria, Va. home, you have no trouble believing her when she complains, "My phone rings off the hook all the time. I hate the phone."

Both of them are currently riding high in the notoriously competitive world of network television. Stevens is seen every week in the Irwin Allen television series *Code Red*, in which he portrays a firefighter with an independent streak.

Dixon is also on ABC. In the show *Bosom Buddies*, she plays Sonny Lumet, a naive temptress who is an aspiring dancer working as a nurse.

"I feel proud that parents send me fan letters saying their little girls want to grow up and be like my character Sonny because there's a lot of Sonny in me," says Dixon, describing some of the joys of prime time popularity.

Stevens has a similar view. "My rationale is that in today's society it's not such a bad thing to be a positive role model for young people."

Andrew and Donna became friends after meeting as teammates in last season's *Battle of the Network Stars*.

"I have to make time for friends. I didn't do that before, but it takes a toll on you," says Stevens, a 10-year-veteran of the hectic enter-



tainment business.

"I didn't realize the long hours necessary to make a television series," says Dixon who usually reports to the set at 7:30 a.m. and does not return home until evening. "Fortunately, there's a special love between each and every one of us on *Bosom Buddies*."

While Dixon is enjoying the success she has received so far in her career, she is quick to make her priorities clear. "The most important thing in life is your friends and family. I love men. Ideas have changed about men and women. You can have men as friends and go out and have a good time and you're

PHOTOS BY DAVID M. KING



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DONNA DIXON AND ANDREW STEVENS



Donna Dixon: "I don't mean to sound naive but when I get married I only want to get married once. I'm willing to wait. That's why I want to get everything out of my system now."



Andrew Stevens: "I'm looking for things to do that people will respond to. It's a little disconcerting when you do a project that you really put everything into and people don't respond to it."

just friends. I'm very fortunate to have a lot of good friends."

While *Bosom Buddies* is Dixon's first show after a successful but whirlwind modeling career in New York, Stevens has become a respected actor as a result of his work in over a dozen television projects and nine feature films.

"I've always done leading man roles, but the most interesting for me were leading men who were characters," says Stevens. He was seen as the star in the successful television versions of *The Bastard* and *The Rebels* from John Jakes' chronicle of a pioneer American family.

And in his most recent film, *The Seduction*, he plays a "heavy" for the first time, a career risk that he accepted because it was "a very strong role" for him. "I'm looking for things to do that people will respond to. It's a little disconcerting when you do a project that you really put everything into and people don't respond to it."

One can see that Stevens and Dixon are extremely conscious of the power of their medium. "When there is relevant social or political comment to be made, that's what really gives you the tingles when you're doing it," says Stevens.

Donna discovered the broad impact of her role as Sonny during a recent visit to Long Beach (Calif.) Veterans Hospital with a Bob Hope show.

"I walked out on stage and all those poor men started shouting 'Donna Dixon, Donna



DONNA DIXON AND ANDREW STEVENS

Dixon," she remembers. "I realized then that the only life those men have is television. I am contributing something and I'm doing something that I love."

Both readily admit that their profession takes its toll on their personal lives, although Stevens thinks that Hollywood has taken a bum rap as a particularly bad place for marriages to survive.

Even after his divorce last year from former *Charlie's Angels* star Kate Jackson, he says, "I don't think the mortality rate for marriages in Hollywood is any higher or lower than anywhere else... There are added pressures, but

that's the nature of doing what we do. You have to be prepared to pick up and move your life for months at a time."

Dixon believes in the institution of marriage, but adds quickly, "I don't mean to sound naive, but when I get married I only want to get married once. I'm willing to wait. That's why I want to get everything out of my system now. I want to do everything I want to do." With that in mind, she says she is determined not to turn 40 and look back "wondering what could have been."

"The only thing I can think about right now is my career. Of course, someday I will be



married. I want to have children because that's so important to me. But now it's difficult even to have a relationship because of the hours. There's not much of a social life."

When Dixon does get some time off, she loves to do athletic things such as racquetball or horseback riding. "I love being outdoors and I love the beach. I fell in love with California because I love how everyone is into health."

But she also loves being by herself. "I light candles and listen to music or read a book. The best gift that you could ever give me is a book. I love to read. I love books that make me think." She mentions Ayn Rand as one of her favorite authors.

Both stars are optimistic about their television shows. *Bosom Buddies* was canceled once but demand from its viewers brought it back. The show was rated one of 1981's best on television by *Time* magazine.

"We proved to ABC that we do have an audience. It's a wonderful show. I believe in it," says Dixon.

Originally *Code Red* was produced as a show to be seen during normal prime time hours, but ABC decided to schedule it opposite *60 Minutes* where its scripts had to meet a Federal Communications Commission requirement for news, information, or children's programming.

Originally, the show was to be canceled but when ratings improved it was renewed at least until the end of the season. "We've gotten the highest rating (other than *60 Minutes*) for that time slot of any show in a couple of years," says Stevens.

Not bad for an ex-drummer who only be-



Donna Dixon and *Bosom Buddies* cast (left to right): Telma Hopkins, Wendle Jo Sperber, Holland Taylor. Bottom row: Tom Hanks, Peter Scolari.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ABC



Andrew Stevens plays his first big role as a "heavy" in *The Seduction* with Morgan Fairchild.



PHOTOS COURTESY AVCO EMBASSY AND ABC

came an actor because he had a hole in his schedule in high school and wanted to meet "a gorgeous blonde who came to our school as the new speech teacher." Stevens went on to win the Tennessee state competition in duet acting, including \$2,500 in scholarships.

And, of course, both make a little time for racquetball. Stevens has been playing racquetball "on and off for five years, although I can't really play as often as I'd like and take a chance on getting hurt and interrupting my career."

Stevens says that his aggressive style of play has resulted in various bumps, bruises, and twisted ankles over the years.

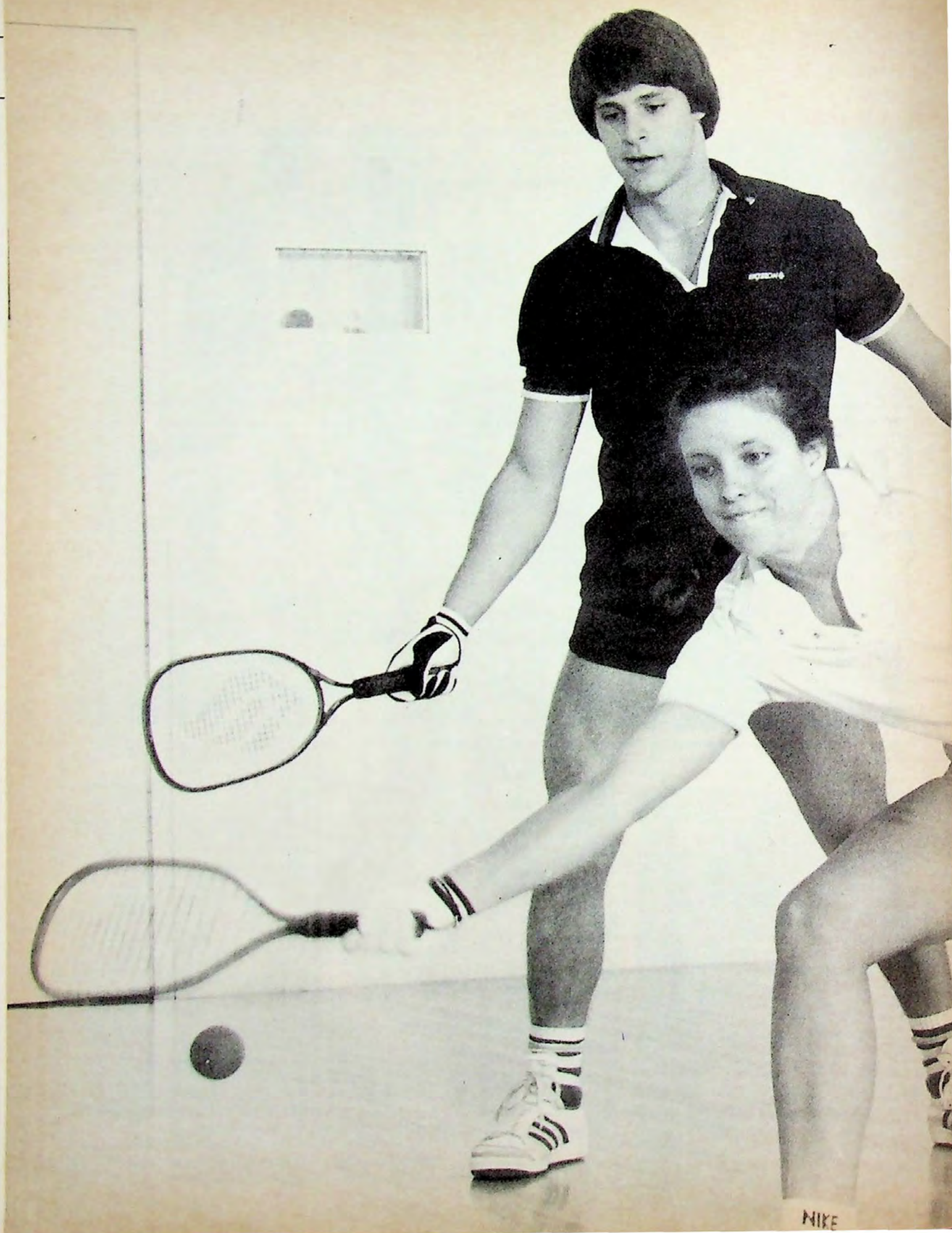
Dixon also wishes she had more time for racquetball. "I was always a tennis player, then I took a racquetball class in college and fell in love with the sport," she says. "But my schedule limits the amount of time I can play."

As for the future, Dixon wants to do feature films. "I love doing comedy, but I'm very hungry for dramatic roles. I have a long way to go. I'm looking forward to a lot of hard work."

That work currently includes several classes a week in acting and dance. "For the first time in my life, I'm doing something I really enjoy and not thinking of 10 other things I'd rather be doing," she says. A great fan of old movies, Dixon says Katharine Hepburn is the actress she most admires.

Stevens looks forward to turning 30 in four years. "From an outsiders viewpoint, it might seem that I'm doing pretty well, but I'm just trying to make the best of what is available now. To me, I'm not satisfied with what I'm doing... most of the really good roles start at about 30 years old."

As one can see, Stevens and Dixon are similar in one respect both are satisfied with their current careers but realize there are other goals to reach and things to conquer. Every year thousands of young men and women come to Hollywood chasing just that sort of brass ring that these two friends have successfully secured. Most don't make it. Some do. For a few such as Andrew Stevens and Donna Dixon the chase is on for a bigger merry-go-round.



TWO MARTINOS STRAIGHT UP

No sibling rivalry here. Pros Mark and Laura Martino have each other's interests at heart.

BY MIKE SNAPP

For racquetball pros Laura and Mark Martino, the game began a little over six years ago.

Laura, then 16, found her first racquet neatly wrapped under the Christmas tree. Mark, two years her junior, was forced to wait another four or five months for his.

"I think we played for about a year before we got into any real tournaments," recalls Laura, now an attractive woman of 22. "I remember we saw this ad in a magazine that said they'd help pay the way of the first 200 entrants to the Junior Nationals in Chicago. Mark and I thought we were hot stuff at the time, so we sent the application in the same day. And we made the first 200."

"The ad said they would pay us so many cents for every mile we flew," says Mark, picking up the story. "But what we decided to do, instead, was have my mom and dad pack up the car, along with our six other brothers and sisters, and drive to Chicago. The money they gave us paid for everything. And all of the Martinos got to go."

The result of that initial exposure to the world of competitive racquetball was a second place finish for Laura and a lesson in humility for 15-year-old Mark. "I was awful," he laments. "Fortunately, I think I've gotten a little better since then."

Both of them have.

Today, in addition to being one of the few brother and sister combinations on the courts,

they're two of the sport's youngest and fastest rising stars as well.

Laura, the 1980 Women's Professional Racquetball Association (WPRA) National Amateur Champion, is just beginning her second year on the pro tour. She finished seventh in the rankings last season. A senior at San Diego State University, where she's studying accounting, Laura says she is confident of success as a racquetball pro. Sometimes, she says, too confident.

She vividly remembers the time she "borrowed" some of the tuition money her family had set aside for her schooling to finance a trip to a big tournament. "I really thought I'd win it," she says later, "and that this money would be sort of an investment. I didn't realize at the time that I might lose and have to go crawling back home and ask for more money to pay tuition. This, I guess, is where cockiness gets you."

Whereas Laura's future looks bright and promising at present, Mark's is somewhat unclear. The question, though, is not one of talent. Those who know the game say Mark has as much talent as anyone who's ever picked up a racquet. He took third in the American Amateur Racquetball Association (AARA) Nationals last year, second in the World Games and, along with his good friend and partner, Ed Andrews, recently upset Jeff Kwartler and Mark Malowitz to win the AARA National Doubles Championship.



TWO MARTINOS STRAIGHT UP

More recently, he defeated some of the sport's top pros—Jerry Hilecher, Rich Wagner and Bret Harnett—in the Schoeber's Christmas Classic in Pleasanton, Calif., before finally losing 15-9, 15-9 to Andrews in the finals. In another tourney last year, Martino defeated Craig McCoy, Wagner and Andrews to win the event.

Like a great many aspiring racquetball players across the country, Mark's dream of making the pro tour has been put on hold. The only real tour today is the one sponsored by Catalina, and that currently is limited to 12 players.

While the basic concept provides a much needed sense of security for the dozen "invitees," it has proven a formidable roadblock for players such as Martino and Andrews who show promise, but have no one to show it to. Although given the opportunity to qualify and play on a regional basis, as well as in various pro-ams, Martino and Andrews have been left largely out in the cold... and out of the money.

And Laura Martino, for one, thinks something ought to be done about it.

"If Mark were a girl he'd have a much better looking future than he does now," she says. "I guess that's the big difference between the men's and women's associations right now. The WPRA is trying to get more people involved, and has set up its pay structure to do just that. We want young people to participate, and we want the sport to grow. With the men it's just the opposite. They're putting a little cage around these 12 people and telling everybody else, like Mark, that they can't come home. That they can't play. And that's wrong."

"I've been told that this is probably being done with the best interests of the sport in mind because they have to start with a nucleus and then grow," continues Laura. "But when I have a brother who, potentially, can beat a lot of these guys and earn a living doing it, I just can't see any reason behind it."

The third and fourth children in a family of 10, Laura and Mark have something else going for them besides racquetball: friendship. They actually enjoy each other's company, both admit, and are the best of friends. And, while they admit that their interest in racquetball may have served to bring them a little closer together, the roots of this relationship, they say, can be traced to their Fountain Valley (Calif.) home of 15 years.

"We're a very close family," says Laura. "I guess most big families are. Mark and I, of course, are a lot closer because we spend a lot of time together—both on the courts and off. We used to play and work out together all the time before I went away to school. Even now, he'll come down to San Diego to see if he can still beat me, or I'll come up here. It's a nice relationship."

"I think Laura actually looks forward to my

coming down to visit her in San Diego," Mark adds, "because we can run or go lift. Vacation time is the best, because we can just go crazy, whether we're on the court or in the weight room. You see, when I'm with her we can do all of the things she can't do with any of her girl friends. And it's always a lot more fun to condition for a sport with someone else."

Laura, whose school work compounds her scheduling problems a bit, works out an average of six days a week. Her normal routine, she says, might have her attending classes in the morning, then lifting, running and playing in the afternoons. She then comes home to a desk full of school books in the evening.

It is, she admits, a delicate balancing act.

Mark, on the other hand, a recent graduate of Fountain Valley High School, has passed up college so far in hopes of finding his future on the racquetball court. He normally spends three days a week on upper body weights, an additional two to three on the lower body—running and Nautilus—and, some say he is one of the best conditioned athletes around.

That, however, was not always the case. Not according to big sister Laura. "Mark was under the impression when he started playing that if he hit a million balls a day on the court, it didn't matter if he were in condition or not. He thought every time a ball came to him he'd just roll it out. So he didn't work out for about a year and a half. Finally, after he almost died in a couple of tournaments, he came around... his old heart was about to go at the age of 16."

"I'd have to say that I didn't exactly start racquetball as an athlete," Mark sheepishly admits. "But you have to remember I was only

16... When you lose because you're out of breath, because you're fatigued, that's got to tell you something. I did it a couple of times, and told myself that it would never happen again. If somebody is going to beat me, they're going to beat me because I'm missing shots, not because I'm tired."

If you get the feeling there's no sibling rivalry between Laura and Mark, you're right. In fact, their ties are such that they take care of each other and help each other through the bad times.

There was the time, they recall, when Mark, suffering from an ailing back and ankle, needed new tennis shoes to run stadiums, and couldn't even afford the laces. Laura was there to help with a new pair of high tops. Conversely, there was the time Laura was laid up with mononucleosis for five months, couldn't work and couldn't afford the tournament fees. Mark got a job installing swimming pools and financed both their tournament expenses for the next few months.

Jealousy? No trace of that here, either. Just something called mutual admiration.

"I get more nervous when I watch Laura play in tournaments than when I play," says Mark. "And she's remarkable. She beats a lot of players because she's just so much smarter than they are. That's not saying that her talents aren't necessarily that much better, it's just that her head is."

Dr. Bud Muehleisen, a longtime friend and coach to both of the Martinos, agrees: "Laura's a very good student of the game," he says. "What she lacks in quickness she overcomes in execution. She has a very good forehand, can shoot as well as anybody, and is one of the nicest women on the tour. I would certainly think she's one of the women to watch



PHOTOS BY DAVID M. KING



Laura and Mark Martino are the third and fourth children in a family of 10. "We're a close family," says Laura. "Mark and I are a lot closer, of course, because we spend a lot of time together on a racquetball court."

out for in the future."

And the younger Martino?

"We've worked very hard to get Mark physically sound," says Muehleisen, who also coaches Andrews. "He just needs to work on his head game a bit to get it together. Mark's a very young player, and he can hit the ball as hard as anyone in racquetball. His forte is confidence. He forces his opponents to play his game. And that, I think, is why he's hanging in there with the big boys. . . and beating a lot of them."

"Mark used to be kind of an air-head," Laura quickly adds. "He was more of a spectacular player than anything else. People watching him would be amazed at some of the shots he made. The only problem was he'd only make one out of 10. Now, I think he's learned to improve his shot selection a bit."

In spite of obvious skills, it appears certain that if Mark Martino is to make any kind of lasting impression in the world of men's pro racquetball he's going to have to make the most of every opportunity given him to beat the "name" players wherever and whenever he gets a chance. And that, he says, is exactly what he is attempting to do.

"I honestly don't know what I'm going to do

in a year or two," he says. "I do know I'm going to start college next semester. If the same system is in effect the year after that, I'll just concentrate a little more on school than on racquetball. You know, I've been going at this hard since I started. I just can't quit all of a sudden. This is everything I've looked forward to. This is the year I was hoping to start playing and doing something. And now they say I can't play. What else can I do but wait and play in these local tournaments and just win? That's the only way I'm maybe going to get through the system."

As for Laura, her future depends, to a great extent, upon the ultimate success of the WPRA. Women can now make a living out of the game if they're in the top four or five in the country, she says. As one of the top women players in the country, she is optimistic about the present activity of the WPRA, and has nothing but praise for its current leadership.

Still, there is a question in her mind. "When I began playing I tried to give myself options," she says. "I love to play racquetball, I have a real good time and I'm very competitive. I'll play for another year, another two years, and if it does grow I'll be there. If it isn't going anywhere, and I'm not making a decent living at it, then I'll just get out and go do something

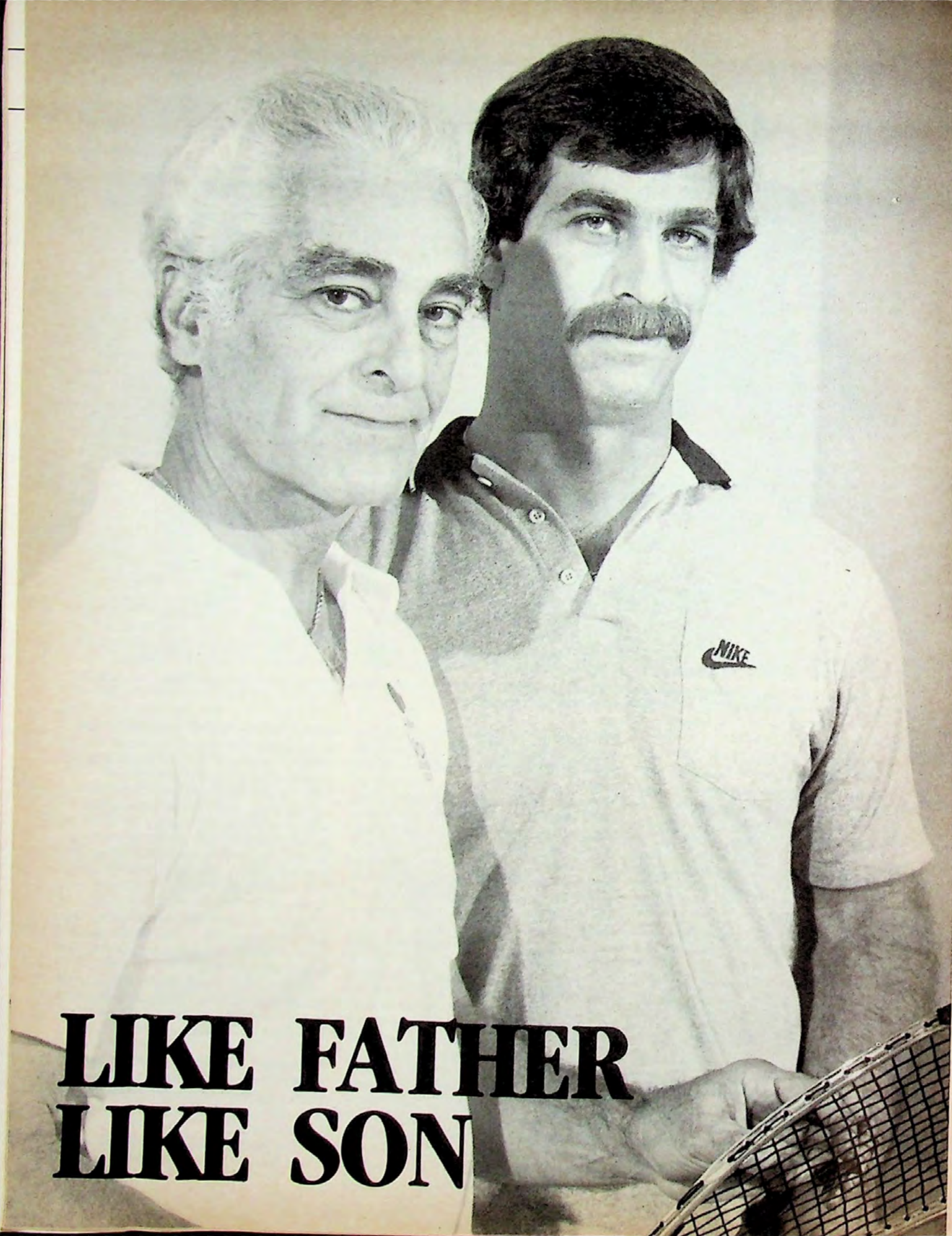
with my degree. I just got a sponsor (Ektelon) who's going to be paying my expenses and helping me out a lot. So it's a no-lose situation the way I see it right now."

"As far as a long-term future is concerned, I'll play until I lose interest in the sport. We women have as much going for us as we possibly can now, with everything else being what it is. But I just don't know if I could play and travel the tournaments forever. It's fun and I have a good time, but it's not a real secure living. You hurt yourself and you're out of there. You don't play well in a couple of tournaments and you're out a lot of money. It's not a job where you get a paycheck every two weeks, that's for sure."

So, one might naturally ask, with all of the apparent controversy and potential problems facing them in the future, what is it that keeps Laura and Mark Martino on the court swinging?

"Maybe we're just a couple of bums at heart," says Laura, smiling as she casts a quick glance at her younger brother. "Maybe it's because we happen to like the game, and believe in it."

"Then again, maybe we're just a little bit crazy. We're Martinos, you know."



**LIKE FATHER
LIKE SON**



Nine years ago, Dr. Burt Morrow bought a couple of wooden paddles from a sporting goods store. He took them home to his 20-year-old son Mark, not realizing that the purchase would change their lives.

Racquetball—then flourishing as paddleball—quickly became an obsession with the Morrows. Today they are perhaps the best father-son doubles team in the country, but the story behind their ascendancy is filled with failed expectations, an abandoned career and political intrigue.

In 1973, Mark Morrow was a promising college student with an interest in science and an undeveloped athletic ability. His father, Burt, was a successful children's dentist practicing in Cerritos, Calif. In his youth, Burt played semi-professional softball, and kept in shape by playing handball on a regular basis. It was this interest in handball that prompted him to buy the two paddles.

"Since I was a handball player, and since paddleball is basically a handball game, I bought a couple of racquets. Mark and I went over to the college and started playing. Six months or so later I bought a couple of wooden racquets, and we started playing with them. Then Mark got me a modern racquet for my birthday. We started playing a little more earnestly, and that's how it developed," Burt recalls.

"When we first started playing, I could beat Mark only because I was playing more hand-

Somewhere out there may be a father-son doubles team better than Burt and Mark Morrow. But don't bet on it.

BY CHARLIE BRITTAIN

ball than he. Racquetball is a game you don't start playing well initially. It takes a while to learn the swing, and I already had one. But within a year or so Mark was beating me."

"We've always been sports people," Mark says. "It wasn't that tough to pick up. It took quite a few years to get really good, however."

The Morrows spent a lot of time playing together, honed their skills, and after a couple of false starts, they began winning doubles tournaments in Southern California.

"We first entered a doubles tournament at U.C. Irvine in 1973," Burt remembers. "At that time there was no pro division. Even Charlie Brumfield was playing in the open division. Our first doubles championship was at the Manhattan Beach (Calif.) Athletic Club in 1976. Then we went down to San Diego and won there." That was when their skills as a team became recognized.

By this time the Morrow tandem was playing four or five times a week. Burt had a dental practice to consider, so it was Mark who flew into the game with total abandon.

"At that time, I was a pre-med biology student at UCLA but racquetball just sort of phased that out," Mark says now.

Mark thought he was good enough to win in the newly-established pro circuit, and, therefore, quit school to compete. In his first tournament, in Las Vegas, he reached the quarterfinals, eventually losing to Marty Hogan. But it was enough to fuel his ambitions.

He continued placing high although his auspicious start did not bring him into the top five. He was generally ranked in the 10 to 12 range but he did reach a number seven ranking once. He was not making much money but he loved the game and continued to compete. Then last season, the pro tour had an invitational format, and Morrow was not one of the players invited.

"I wasn't making a lot of money but I was paying expenses. I had a lot of fun for four or five years. I traveled all over, and partied most of the time. You can't beat it for a job. It's not like I lost money. Racquetball was never really work," says Morrow. "But I'm not happy about the situation with Charlie Drake (the organizer of the new pro format and the one who advised on the selection of the players invited) for two reasons. One, it made me

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON



tional setup. "I don't think it was fair or right that they left out some of the veteran players. Mark knows he's not going to make a living off professional racquetball. But some other players could have. I personally think Charlie Drake has a lot on the ball. I think he's a very bright guy. I think if he played his cards right, he could have done a lot for racquetball. But he's more interested in doing a lot for Charlie Drake."

When Mark was forced out of professional racquetball he faced some tough decisions. He had given up college, and did not really have another career. While playing racquetball he ran a drain cleaning business from Hawthorne, Calif., and continues to do so now while contemplating his future. A position in the computer field looks most promising now.

"That's life," says Mark. "This new tour just made up my mind for me. I had a lot of fun, and prefer to think of it in those terms."

"I was never really thrilled with teaching racquetball, so that's out. It's actually brutal trying to teach. Too much strain. I'll still play for fun, and now that I'm not a professional, my dad and I can play together more."

"I'd say we'd be one of the best father-son teams in the world. I don't think you could pick out any team who would just out-and-out beat us. You could find people who would be right up there, but it would be the father who would be the weak link. My dad's one of the best for his age."

"If they had a father-son doubles tournament, I'd love it," says Burt. "It would be nice if someone would sponsor a national tournament."

Burt plays at least four times a week at the La Mirada Athletic Club, meeting a small group of enthusiasts for regular lunch-hour sessions. In the future, he hopes he and Mark will have the opportunity to play more competitive doubles.

"I like doubles," Burt says. "It's a headier game than singles. You have to think more plus have the ability. When you play singles you know where your opponent is, and you usually hit the ball where he isn't. But in doubles you have less to shoot at, and you have to be very precise where you hit the ball. You find a lot of good singles players who aren't good doubles players because of that."

Mark hopes he and his father will have more time to play together now that he is off the tour.

"We played a lot when I was an amateur, but once I turned pro there was not much time. We virtually learned together, so we are a pretty good team. Now I hope we can play more together," says Mark.

"We'll see what happens," says Burt. "I feel confident we could hold our own against any other father-son combination."



"I don't think you could pick out any team who would out-and-out beat us," says Mark Morrow. "You could find people who would be right up there but it would be the father who would be the weak link. My dad's one of the best for his age."

quit professional racquetball. Two, it isn't good for the sport. It's not like it was a crushing blow to my life because I wasn't making that much money. It's just too bad for the sport."

Although Burt was supportive when Mark decided to pursue professional racquetball, he did have some reservations.

"I would have preferred Mark to continue with school," he says. "But he told me he just had to take a little time off to see how he did. If he didn't do it then, he would never have the opportunity. I had mixed feelings but didn't really discourage him. Those were his decisions."

Burt also is displeased with the new invita-

INSTRUCTION

Doubles

BY BRAD KRUGER

There are a few maniacal racquetballers crazy enough to enter the court with three other players, all of whom possess a potential weapon in their grasp, and assume there is no need for a game plan. These players, who may simply be foolhardy thrill seekers, are demonstrating the distinct characteristics of lunatics and undoubtedly are high ranking candidates for the neighborhood asylum.

Without a system of operation, the four players resemble large wind-up toys that move about the court mechanically, colliding with various walls or each other. Inevitably, one of these players comes face to face with another's racquet and the match is cut short. A dramatic dash to the hospital usually follows.

For safety's sake, and, perhaps, for aesthetics as well, an analytical view of the proper way to play doubles will be offered here.

Why can a couple of incompetent singles players beat two strong singles players in

doubles? Simple. The weaker players have successfully merged their individually limited resources and put forth a unified force. Each

"The major problem blocking the development of successful teamwork is indecision."

partner's weakness was complemented by the other's strength. They have developed a system enabling them to know each other's moves and patterns of play. They know exact-

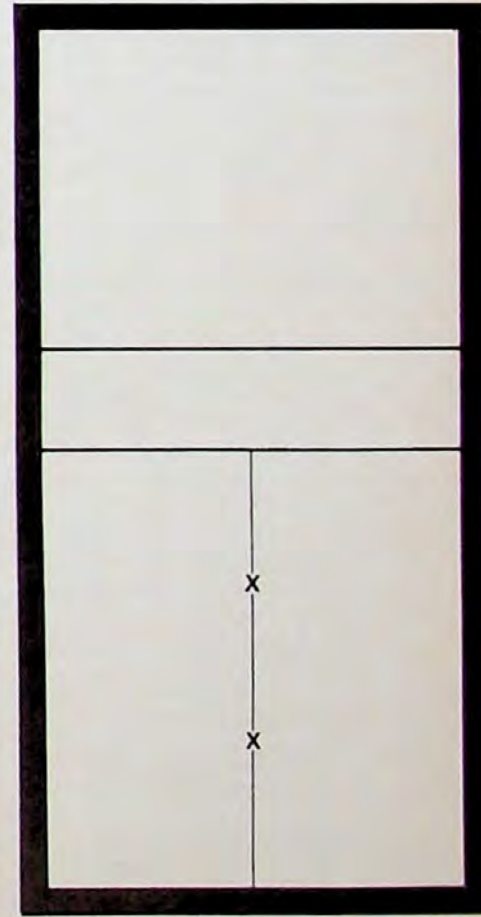
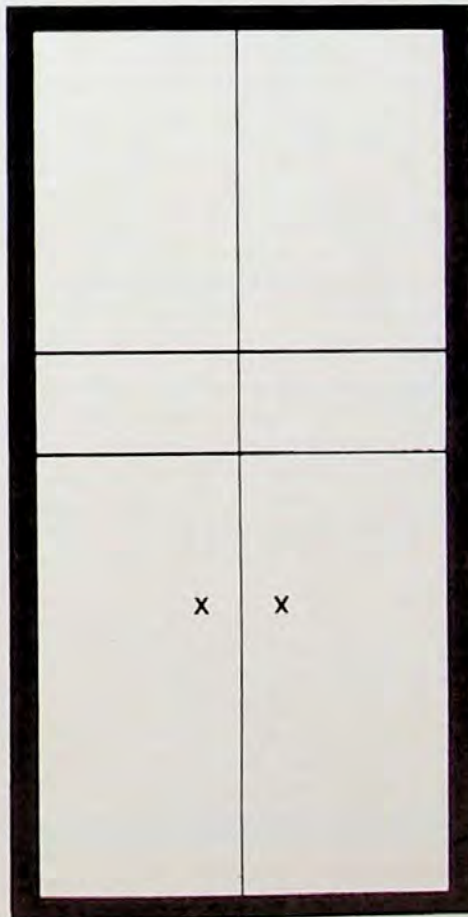
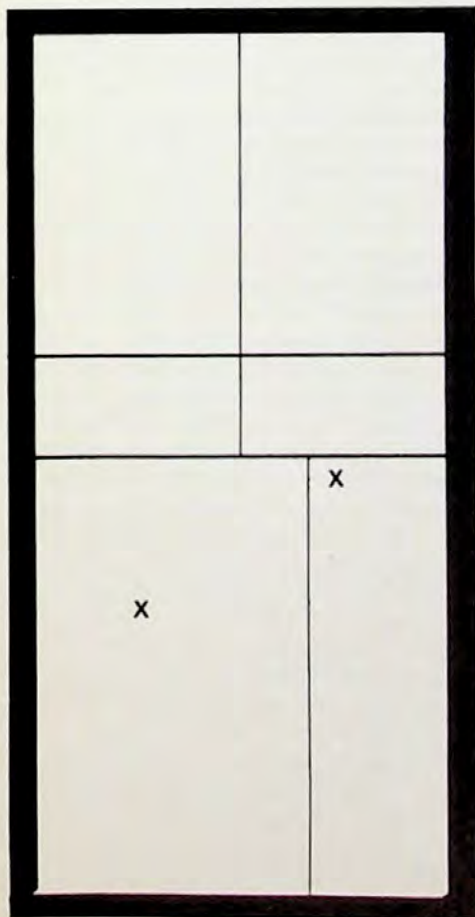
ly where, when, and how their partner is going to react in any given situation. For some this takes years. Others need only a few times out on the court.

The major problem blocking the development of successful teamwork is indecision. Which player is to take which shot? While this problem can never be completely eliminated, it can be significantly reduced by dividing the court into specific portions. Each player, then, has the responsibility for covering all the shots that enter his respective coverage zone.

Coverage Zones

There are many different theories on how to divide the court up but the most successful method is termed the "side-by-side" formation. As 90 percent of all racquetballers are right handed, the side-by-side formation is geared for a righty-righty team.

In this formation, the left side player is responsible for covering all shots that enter



If two right handed players are on the same team, the leftside player (the stronger of the two) should cover two-thirds of the court with the weaker player covering the forehand shots. Center: If a righty is teamed with a lefty, and both are about equal, they should divide the court in half. A seldom-used formation is the "I" which is used when you have a quick front court player and a hot-shooting back court player.

the left half of the front court and the left two-thirds of the back court. The remainder of the court is the rightsider's responsibility.

The leftside player is given more court to cover for one primary reason. In most cases, a player's forehand is stronger, and more consistent than his backhand. When the ball travels between teammates, the rightside player can hit the ball with his backhand or the leftside player can hit the ball with his forehand. In an attempt to maximize the use of the forehand, this ball should be taken by the leftsider since the ball is on his forehand side. If the rightside player were to hit the ball, he would be using the backhand. In a nutshell, the leftside player is given the center alley to maximize the strengths of the team.

Just as each player has a specific region of the court to cover, so, too, does each player have specific responsibilities. The rightsider has a tough role to play. Not so much physically, but mentally. He has less than one half of the court to cover and, except in extreme cases, will seldomly hit a backhand because his partner will usually have a better opportunity with his forehand. On average, the rightsider will hit a mere 20 percent of the shots throughout the match. Yet there is a great deal of mental pressure on him because he must be constantly alert and ready to hit every ball that enters his coverage zone.

Adding to this mental pressure is the fact that the rightsider usually plays a little further up in the front court than the leftsider and, thus, must make a quicker decision as to whether he should attempt the shot or leave it for his partner.

The rightsider must position himself very close to the imaginary line that divides the court in half lengthwise. From this position he can hit most of the shots that enter his coverage zone with his forehand. If the rightsider were to move over any more to the right he would not be maximizing his forehand, but would be forced to play more shots near the pre-set boundary with his backhand. If this were the case, he would clearly not be maximizing the strength of his forehand.

Drifting to the right and hugging a side wall is a problem that plagues the majority of beginning doubles players. In general, beginners are intimidated by the social pressures that seem to materialize in center court (i.e., kicking, gouging, elbowing, etc.) and in attempt to escape, they have the tendency to drift from this optimum position. Well, the pros don't exactly savor the closeness that is generated in center court but they realize in order to win games, the rightsider must be positioned in this area.

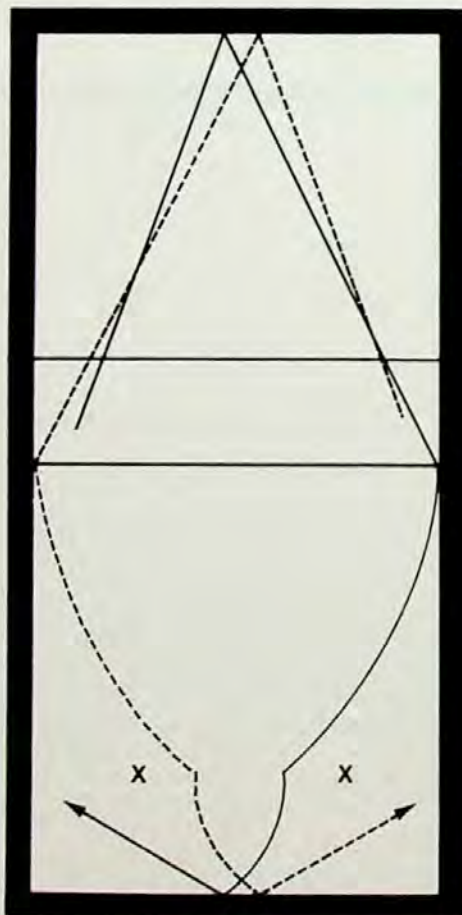
The leftsider is responsible for playing almost 80 percent of the shots. Therefore, the person awarded this position should be the superior player of the two team members. If both players are equivalent in singles, an

analysis based on the individual strengths of each player should be made to find the right person for the job. Two very important qualities for consideration are endurance and a good backhand.

Because the leftsider must cover the rear two-thirds of the court, his positioning is usually a little deeper than that of his partner. This deeper position grants him a few extra milliseconds so he can evaluate the rally and figure out which player should take which shots.

The leftsider is therefore considered the tactical engineer while the rally is in progress. It is his duty to announce which player should take which shot should any confusions arise. He issues the commands of "mine" and "yours."

The commanding terms should be kept short and concise. If the leftsider starts to ramble off a sentence or two in the middle of a rally, chances are the rally will be over before the message has been conveyed. If he says nothing, the players may run head-on into each other.



One good serve to use in doubles is the "jam and fly," which can be employed from either side of the court. It contacts the front wall in the center, rebounds off the side wall at the short line, bounces in between the opponents and caroms off the back wall.

Should the situation arise where the rightsider disagrees with the leftsider's command, he should quickly reply with his own command, also keeping it short and to the point. In a case such as this there is seldom any time for further discussion and the leftsider should react to the rightsider's command accordingly.

Even with a lefty-righty team, the best formation to play is still the side-by-side formation. The only difference is a slight modification of the team's coverage zones. To maximize the strengths of both players, the court is divided straight down the center of the court. Both players should position themselves as close as they can get to the dividing boundary. From that position, they can both hit the majority of shots with their forehands.

The major problem this team will face is when the ball ends up in center court between the two partners. Usually this ball must be taken with the backhand. It is therefore wise to decide before the match which player has the stronger backhand and make this person responsible for all of the shots that travel into center court.

You'll see the "I" formation in use almost as often as you'll see the Easter bunny distributing pterodactyl eggs on Easter morn. The formation consists of having one player responsible for covering the entire front court and the other responsible for the entire back court.

The front court player is usually a good retriever, almost always the quicker of the two. The backcourt player must be consistent when shooting from deep court and have substantial control over the ceiling ball.

There are many reasons why this formation is seldom used. The major factor is it contributes to indecisiveness. The back court player rarely has enough time to call "mine" or "yours," so the front court player is playing on instinct alone. The front court player can never really be sure what side of the court the back court player is on so he is never sure which shots to hit and which shots to let go. In addition to this, if the team is composed of two right handed players, they have two backhands along the left wall in contrast with the one backhand in the side-by-side formation.

The I formation is usually employed when there is a distinctly faster player on the team or when all else has failed.

Positioning

The team teamwork has been overstressed in doubles. The team conveys the image of two players moving about the court at will, covering up for their partner wherever a difficult situation arises. While this is the ideal goal, it seldom happens. When attempting to cover for your partner, confusion generally reigns and the players may end up running

into each other.

The system of dividing the court into specific regions for each player to cover calls for little, if any, back-up from either partner. The court has been divided and the players are responsible for returning any shot that enters into their coverage zone.

The primary reason for dividing the court into zones is to lessen the level of indecision that arises between two partners. If you start to move into your partner's territory, no matter how difficult the shot, you are disrupting the entire system.

Only in extreme cases of poor positioning should you break this concrete system of court coverage to backup your partner's zone. Perhaps your partner has been caught in deep court and the opposition wallops a kill shot in the front region of his coverage zone. By instinct you'll want to move in immediately and make the return but make sure that your partner cannot possibly get to the call himself. Once confirmed, loudly yell "mine" and move in for the return.

The Serve

The serves used in doubles are almost the same as those used in singles. The goal is to ace or obtain a weak return from the opposition. The easiest way to do this is by concentrating all serves on the weakest point of the opposing team.

Therefore, if both receiving players have weak backhands, the serve should be directed to the rear left corner. If the receivers both have weak forehands, the serve should be directed down the center of the court or to the right rear corner. If the opposition's leftsider has a strong backhand and the rightsider has a strong forehand, or if you're playing a lefty-righty team, the serve should be directed down the center of the court. The intent is to immediately recognize and expose any apparent weakness on the opposing team.

The "jam and fly" serve is often employed by today's more successful doubles teams yet has remained relatively unknown throughout racquetball's lower echelons.

The ball is struck crisply at a wide angle from either side of the court depending on where you want the ball to end up. It contacts the front wall in the center and rebounds off the side wall about two feet above the short line. The ball continues in its flight and takes its first bounce about five feet from the back wall, in between the opposing players. It then caroms off the backwall towards the side wall where it plunges to a quick death.

Usually the receiver waits until the ball has taken its first bounce before attempting the return. But as the ball starts to carom off the back wall towards the side wall, the receiver is forced to turn with the ball so as not to lose sight of it. This action is commonly termed the "death-spin." It is said that a player is never

really quite the same after being attacked by three or four of these in a row. The receiver must have fine footwork and fantastic hand-eye coordination if he hopes to return this serve competently after it takes its first bounce.

Basic Strategy

While it may not be the nicest prospect, doubles matches are won by bombarding the weaker player of the opposing team with as many shots as possible. It is very important to recognize and expose the weakest player early in the match.

If the playing ability of both members of the team is equal, then you must concentrate on playing basic racquetball doubles strategy. The basic strategy is to move one of the opposing team's members into an extreme position within his coverage zone and then hit the next shot to a position within his zone that he cannot possibly reach. For example, you can hit a shot that moves one of the opponents into deep court and follow up with a kill shot in the front position of his coverage zone. On paper this sounds quite easy. In actual practice it is much more difficult. Therefore a few basic guidelines can be offered.

The kill shot, like all other shots in doubles, should be hit hard. A softly hit kill shot will take longer to bounce twice than a crisply hit kill shot. This gives the opposition a few extra seconds to move in and return the ball. Even if the kill shot is a little high, as long as it is flying at a fast pace, the opposition is still faced with a difficult shot.

Whenever possible, the ball should be killed on the fly so the ball will die in the front court before the opposition, stationed in the back court, can regain position.

The "initiation theory" is also based upon reducing the reaction time of the opposition and thus, raising the level of indecision. Under the guidelines of this theory, each player hits the ball as early in its flight as possible, no matter what options exist. If no immediate set-up is apparent, the player rips the ball hard at one of the many obscure angles on the court. The goal is to win the rally by the element of surprise.

Summary

In addition to splitting the costs of a reserved court among four players, doubles can be a fun and fascinating game. Because good doubles is not dependent on one's capabilities as a singles player, there is hope for even the lowliest racquetball enthusiast. By taking a systematic approach to the game, specifically, dividing the court into coverage zones for you and your partner, and advancing from that point, doubles can be learned quickly, easily and safely. No longer must you shake with spasmodic fear when you enter the court with three others.



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Mixed Doubles: A Social Game

BY CHARLES GARFINKEL

Mixed doubles in racquetball can be a wonderful experience. Men and women can compete together, even though their competitive playing levels are not equal.

At the pro level, Dr. Bud Muehleisen and Lynn Adams teamed up to defeat Dave Peck and Shannon Wright to win the National Mixed Doubles Championships in 1980. Even though Muehleisen was over 20 years older than anyone on the court, his experience, his shotmaking, and his knowledge about instilling confidence in his partner helped lead the team to victory. Mixed doubles is rarely played at the pro level. At the club level, on the other hand, the game is booming.

We have all heard stories about marriages splitting up over mixed doubles matches, verbal and physical abuse between partners, and so forth, but these, of course, have been greatly exaggerated. Mixed doubles should be played as a fun game, and there are definite ways to make the game enjoyable.

When choosing a mixed doubles partner, it is imperative to choose one carefully. Naturally, if you're married, the ideal situation is to play with your spouse. However, if for some reason, you and your spouse don't enjoy teaming up for competition, then you should look for another partner.

You should play with someone whose game complements yours. Each of you should discuss your strengths and weaknesses and play accordingly. Communication on the court is important.

The better player should be willing to compromise. If the better player is a man and if he gets to an easy shot, he can purposely keep the ball in play, hoping that in the next rally, his female partner can put the point away. The idea is to give the weaker player opportunity to get into the game without lowering the level of play.

Men and women should serve to only members of the same sex. This should be done if there is an obvious disparity between the male and female players. Of course, there are some instances in which the woman is superior to her male counterpart, and in this case, no adjustments need be made.

Because a doubles court gets quite crowded, everyone should agree to hold their swing if one of their opponents is directly in the way. No need for blood here. Naturally, you want to win but not at the risk of injuring someone.

The stronger player should play the backhand court, which is where most of the action takes place.

Mixed doubles is similar to regular doubles in that the team making the fewest errors will

win the match. This usually means that each player should try to hit well-placed serves that will elicit weak returns. Usually, the stronger player should attempt to put the ball away.

In tennis, because of the wind and the height of the net, double faults occur quite frequently. However, you should rarely double fault in racquetball. If you miss your first serve, lob the second one.

When returning the serve, the ceiling ball is usually the best shot. This will give you and your partner a chance to move to the strategic center court position. It also moves the serving team towards the backcourt.

It is recommended that you stay to the ceiling until you or your partner can get a shot to put away or pass. Of course, an occasional overhead or Z ball is good to change the pace of the game.

Because there are four players on the court instead of two, you have to be a little more conservative in your thinking. Playing steady racquetball is a big help.

Sometimes, you and your partner might want to try something different. For instance, if you are winning handily, you might want to switch sides with your partner to give each a chance to play the other side of the court.

Instead of hitting every serve hard, you may want to switch to Z serves. Or, you may want to try offensive returns such as passing and kill shots. Or, you may want to let the weaker partner take more shots than he or she usually does. This will give your partner a chance to feel as if he or she is an integral part of the team.

If your team is losing and if a change of strategy doesn't work, don't give your partner an angry or frustrated look. Just chalk it up to experience. Remember, you're playing for fun, not for a million dollars.

Encouraging your partner is very important. When one makes a good shot, the other should offer praise. If one makes a glaring mistake, the other should say, "It's okay! Let's get the next point."

Don't ever use derogatory remarks such as "You reek!" or "What a bum!" Even an exasperated sigh or disgruntled look could completely destroy your partner's confidence. Always be constructive and complimentary.

But you should constantly talk to each other during the match. You should be discussing changes in serves, return of serve, shot selection, and court position.

Unfortunately, on some occasions, in mixed doubles as well as in regular doubles, some players want to win at all costs. Sometimes the stronger player will place a partner in the corner of the court, and attempt to take almost

every shot alone. This is wrong. You're only intimidating and frustrating your partner. It will turn the game into an extremely bad outing.

Some women have played with the macho male who wants to show everyone how superior he is to the women on the court. He hits every shot as hard as he can often trying to hit every shot to the weaker opponent. This also produces a distasteful game.

Fortunately, racquetball is a game in which strategy and placement can overcome uncontrolled power. At the club level, many women actually outplay the men. The important thing is to have fun. Mixed doubles is basically a social game.

R



Mixed doubles partners Bud Stange and Cheryl Bonvissuto talk things over during match. Encouraging each other is important in mixed doubles play. Calling each other names when a shot is missed is destructive. Opposite page: Mixed doubles is a social game. No blood is needed here. If the opponent is in front of a shot, stop play and call a hinder. Don't aim your shot at the player.

PHOTOS BY ANDRE GORZYNSKI



Mixed Doubles Tips

Dr. Bud Muehleisen

"The most important thing to remember is that the strategy for mixed doubles is the same as the strategy for men's and women's doubles. Court position and shot selection applies to mixed doubles as it would to men's and women's doubles."

"The team must be able to understand coverage. You should try to draw the opposing man out of normal coverage when he's trying to cover for his woman partner."

"Mixed doubles teams are only as strong as the weakest partner. Men players should not compensate their strengths because there is a woman on the court."

"The best tip for the female player is to tell herself every ball is coming to her. Then she is usually ready for the shot and mentally into the game."

"The team that controls the front wins in doubles. You want to isolate the weaker player in deep back court, so, in effect, you are playing two against the player in back."

"The woman player cannot allow herself to be intimidated by the male opponent. For this reason mixed doubles teams should play side by side because the I formation (one player in front of the other) could be intimidating to some women players. The male player should play slightly to the side and rear of the woman player."

Lynn Adams

"The biggest problem in playing mixed doubles matches is finding a partner you can co-exist with. You have to be compatible and be able to communicate when things aren't going well."

"You need to find someone equal with your skill level—that makes for more team work."

"You have to learn how to cover behind your partner. You should be ready to cover shots that come to your side. If a shot goes behind your partner that he can't get, you need to pick it up."

Editor's note: Dr. Bud Muehleisen and Lynn Adams won the National Mixed Doubles Championships in 1980. Because they are the best—until dethroned—we asked them to offer some tips for mixed doubles play.

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Exercises for Couples



This exercise is for the hamstrings as well as shoulders and back. Assume the position shown allowing your hands to rest on your partner's arm. The partner applies downward pressure on the back until stretch is felt.



This exercise can strengthen a weak lower back while stretching the rear of the thigh. Face partner. Both of you should have left knee bent with sole of left foot resting on right thigh. Grasp hands. As you lean backward, pull partner forward. Keep back flat. Try and touch chin to knees.



From seated position, lean forward with arms out. Partner applies gentle pressure with body on lower back until groin stretch is felt. Can also stretch hamstrings.

For players with greater flexibility, this position can stretch the groin and thigh. Partner makes sure leg is straight and applies slight pressure to upper leg.



To stretch upper thigh, get in sprinter's position while partner pushes foot toward buttocks and gently pushes body forward.

This exercise stretches the side, groin and hamstrings. Place heel of foot in hand of partner. Bring one arm over head and grab opposite foot.



MODELS: KYM FISHER,
JAMES LEW
PHOTOGRAPHER: DAVID
M. KING



This is one of the best exercises for the side. Place one leg over the other in manner shown. Partner will assist you in putting pressure on knee. Partner's right arm helps pull body around. Head should be turned toward the rear (not shown).



Another exercise for the waist, hips and midsection has you and your partner facing each other with legs spread. The person with bigger legs is on the inside. Hold on to each other's hands and lean as far as possible (one backward, the other forward). Go one turn clockwise and then one turn counterclockwise and so on.



To work the chest muscles, sit facing partner with one's hands against other's wrists. Outside partner tries to bring arms together while inside partner resists.

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INSTRUCTION



To stretch shoulders, place hands behind back and interlock fingers. Partner should raise hands until stretch is felt.



Another shoulder stretch has you bringing hand over head and reaching down as far as possible while at the same time reaching around with the other hand. Partner can assist in grasping hands together. If stretch is too difficult, a towel may be used as an aid.



A total body exercise to finish off the session with a little fun. Stand face to face with partner arms distance apart. Hold hands and body steady as you both swing right legs high in air toward opposite direction. Alternate legs.



INSTRUCTION

Tools for the Novice

BY SUSAN C. LIPNICKEY

It is doubtful that any one of you would attempt to put a four-room addition onto your house without some type of preparation: knowledge of proper tool usage, careful pre-planning, and practical experience on a smaller scale. The building of your racquetball game, similarly, requires the utilization of some of these very same tools that would be used for your house addition.

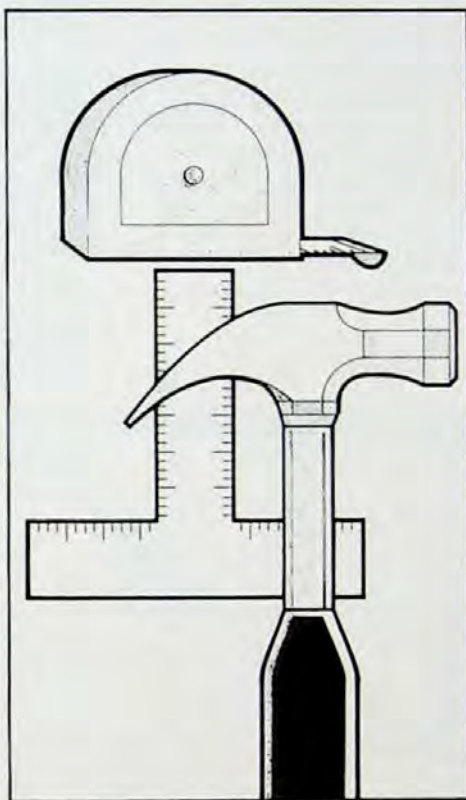
Use your "tape measure" and "level" to insure your accuracy. Do you know how far from the front wall you are? Do you know how far from the back wall you are? Do you know where your racquet face is at various stages throughout your swing? These are questions you should continually try to answer. Just as the practiced carpenter can judge distances and "levelness" with a fair degree of accuracy, as you develop your game you will be able to answer these questions intuitively. Until then, you will need to think about these and "measure up."

The "T-Square," a common element in every tool chest, should also be found in yours. Why? You will soon learn, if you haven't already, that to be an effective racquetball player you must locate yourself in the middle of the court—that part of the pit which resembles a "T." Return to this position after completion of every shot and you will be ready for, and in position to play, the next shot.

Vises are used for the purposes of holding particular materials in place while affording the builder the opportunity to work on them. In order to construct your racquetball game, you must develop the proper grip; hold the racquet properly so that you may handle your shots effectively and carry out your game plan. The grip you employ is fundamental to your game because it is the starting point for all your strokes. Without sound stroking, an all-around high quality game will be beyond your reach. As the novice carpenter checks and rechecks the board in the vise, so the novice racquetball player should check and recheck his grip for forehand and backhand to be sure it is where it should be and can do the most good.

The drill is a tool which might be found in the tool box of the most serious handyman and so it is with the racquetball player. It takes self-discipline and determination to want to improve and to use the drill. Are you a beginning player who thinks that playing a game is the only way to improve; or are you a believer in drilling those skills which you see as weaknesses in your game? Although often tedious and frustrating for the player, it really is necessary to use "the drill." Just as the carpenter changes "bits," depending on

the wood, size of the board, and purpose of the intended hole, so the racquetball player uses different drills depending upon the strokes and/or skills which need improvement.



The "hammer," a frequent inhabitant of the carpenter's tool kit, also has its place in the racquetball pit. One does not "hammer" every shot as if he were trying to drive a nail through a solid oak board. But it is appropriate for racquetball players to utilize "the hammer" because there are some principles of hammering which can be applied to hitting the ball. First, and probably most obvious, one needs to take aim: do not hit the ball before you know where you want to hit it. Second, hit the ball squarely as you would hit the nail: with the center of the implement and evenly over the whole object (be it nail or ball). Third, the swing should be even, not jerky. Not only can you use the portion of the tool used to hammer nails into boards but you can also utilize the claw end. That is correct. Just as you may be called upon to remove a nail from a board, you will be called upon to dig balls out of the corners. One must apply the principles of leverage and follow through evenly when on the racquetball court as well as when removing a nail.

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Court Tactics

BY MARTY HOGAN

I know what you're thinking. Sure, anyone who can serve the ball 140 mph and play eight hours a day can say racquetball strategy is simple. But what about the average guy on the court? Have faith, strategy is simple for you too. The basic rule of them is to shoot when you control center court and move your opponent out of center court when he or she is there and you're not. Hit up and down the alleys, and attack your opponent's weaknesses.

The game seems complicated only when you have to worry about your imperfect shot execution while trying to capitalize on your opponent's weaknesses. You may think I am going to complicate things by going through a long list of tactics (methods) but basically these things are only an extension of the basic strategy. I don't always use these tactics but I have seen them used or have used them in the past. You usually learn by watching other players or reflecting on past losses. Sometimes they work, and sometimes they don't. But they're good to know. Who knows? One of these gems could be the key to turning around an entire match.

Scouting

To put tactics into the proper light, we really need to see how it fits into the whole picture. A match should begin at least four hours before the referee says "play ball." I don't scout players anymore because they're the same players I meet at every tournament, but you should because you probably play different players each tournament. There's no sense in working more than you have to. If a player can't return a Z serve, you should know about it before the match starts, not at the end of the match. Ideally, you should watch the match which will determine whom you will play next. Some of the general things you should evaluate are foot speed (is he a speedster or a sloth?), reflexes, height (tall or short), shot style (shooter or passer), playing philosophy (power or control), patience (short or long), resilience to failure, and endurance. For each of these player categories there is a standard avenue of attack. Some other points to note are the following: What are his responses to different serves (ceiling, pass, or kill)? What are his favorite serves? How effective are they? Does he telegraph his serves? Watch his service motion to pick up keys which can be used as an early warning of his intention.

If you can't scout your opponent, see if you can get a trusted friend to scout him for you. Even if you can watch your opponent play, it's sometimes good to get a second opinion.



The Base Plan

Now that the scouting report is in, it's time to draw up the grand plan. The grand plan, of course, is only intended as a base from which to start. The worst approach is to go onto a court not knowing what you're going to do and praying that you'll get a great idea during the match. A good opponent will blow you out before you know it. The second worst approach is to go into a match with a game plan chiseled into stone which you won't change for anything. You should start with a well defined plan of attack based on your scouting report so that you have a sense of purpose and direction. During the beginning phase of the match (the first five points), test

out this plan, see if those weaknesses that you spotted are still there. As the match progresses, constantly re-evaluate the plan and adapt accordingly to the situation. This is the hard part because you have to make a judgment about your abilities and your opponent's abilities. Hopefully, the plan will gel as the match progresses.

Preparation

After the plan is drawn up, you are two steps away from being ready to play. The next step is to set up for the match. I know it may sound extreme, but Steve Strandemo (and other control players) use to make sure he had a dozen slow balls with him just in case

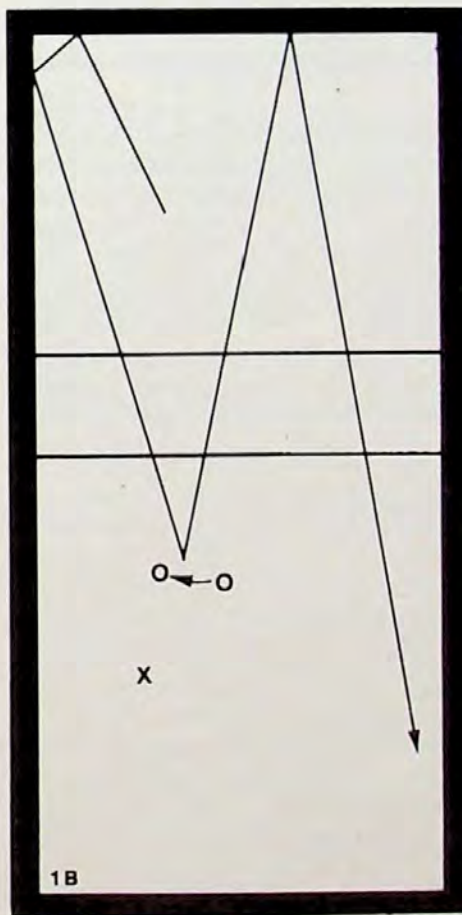
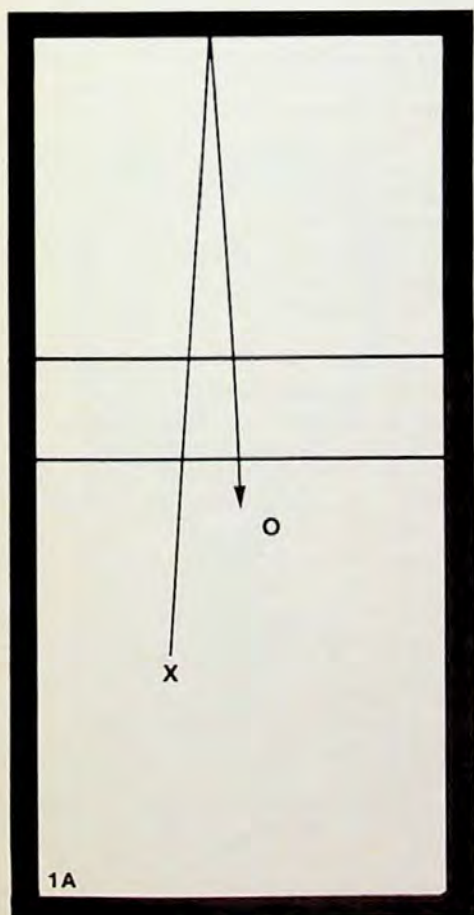
the tournament supplied fast balls. Of course this often leads to a funny situation when the control player brings in his dozen dead balls and the power player brings in his dozen super balls, then, there are 24 balls bouncing around the court during warm up. What I'm trying to get at is that you don't want to worry about equipment shortage or malfunction during the course of a match. Check out your equipment and make sure you have extra racquets, shirts, gloves, and towels before the match begins.

Now that you are exhausted from watching, planning, and organizing, it's finally time to warm up. Begin by doing some stretching exercises. As the blood begins to flow into your muscles, do some jumping jacks or jog

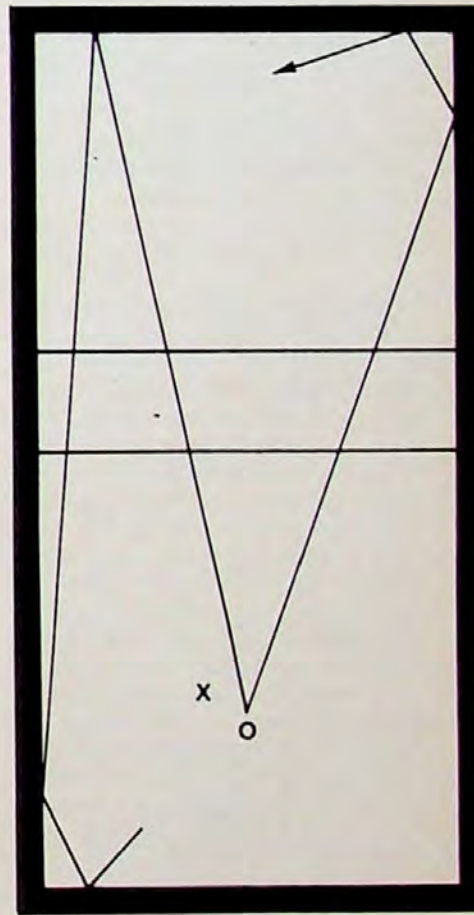
a quarter mile to warm your body up to playing temperature. Finally, get on the court to begin the stroke warm up. You should begin by warming up the basic strokes with an emphasis on good weight transfer and wrist snap. As I've said before, these are critical parts of any stroke and have to be working properly before you move on to increasing the speed and range of your basic shots. Spend the final few minutes hitting your shots at full speed. By this time, your bread and butter shots should be down pat. With the game plan in your head, you should now be ready for the match to begin. But what is in this game plan and how will you carry it out? Here are some guidelines with which most players start.

Service Tactics

Obviously, any weakness in the service return should be attacked, but what if there is no clear answer? Here are some basics: Use low, hard drive serves against very tall or slow players. The idea is that a tall player will have more trouble reaching down. Move the serve side to side against a slow or poorly conditioned player. This tactic should wear your opponent down quickly and you will start getting a bundle of weak returns. Use a high lob or high Z serve against a short or impatient player. Make the short player jump up to return the serve or stretch up into an unaccustomed position. Eventually, you'll wear him down because he will be using weak muscles. Tempt the impatient player to go for



Under normal circumstances (1A), a hard shot hit by player X will go to the back wall. Player O has to run to back court to retrieve it. The alternative (1B) is for player O to spin around and take a quick-draw forehand shot—either a pinch or a pass. The opponent will be taken by surprise.



In a situation in which your opponent is almost directly in front of you and, therefore, unable to see what you are going to hit, he will assume you are going down the right side wall and will move in that direction. You can surprise him by hitting down his backhand side or pinching.

a low percentage kill shot. More than likely, the ball will pop up for a set up. Another way to tempt the impatient player is to hit low lob (junk) serves in which you vary the height and speed. Hit three or four shoulder high slow lobs. Then, quickly hit a three-foot high, medium speed junk into the side wall. This play sometimes works after a series of drive serves. The unsuspecting, impatient player will probably leave the ball up after going for a kill using the same stroke he uses against a slower, lower junk serve. The Z serve works wonders against big klutzes and players with poor footwork.

There are two key points to remember about the service return. The first point is know your limits. I know that my best shot is to kill any drive serve to my backhand down the line, but it probably is not the best choice for you unless you have a good backhand. The second point is that the motion of your opponent's wrist is the key to reading the serve. The wrist cannot lie. Where the wrist goes, so does the serve. Forget all the feet shuffling, hip wriggling, and arm pumping your opponent throws at you during the serve. If the wrist snaps early, the serve is going cross court; if it snaps late, the serve is going down the line. If the wrist snaps very early, it's going to be a Z serve; and if it snaps very late, the serve is going to be a Z in the other direction. Watching the wrist snap is also a good way to focus your concentration during the match. If you can't remember which way the wrist snapped on the last serve, you're probably day dreaming.

Several service return tactics can keep you on the offensive. On slower serves such as lobs or junks which are shallow, move up and half volley the serve for a kill, pass, or to the ceiling. By half volley I mean hit the ball after the bounce as the ball is rising from the floor. You do not have to stay behind the five-foot line after the ball has hit the floor. Coming up on the ball can surprise your opponent and get you a quick point. It can also be very intimidating if he hasn't seen the shot. I've seen many a junk serve expert give up the junk after someone cut the serve off and drilled the ball into the corner for a winner before the server even knew what happened. As you approach the ball, if you find out you can't kill the ball, there's plenty of time to hit the ball into the ceiling. The half volley ceiling ball is also effective. Because the server is usually relaxed and the half volley ceiling ball travels much faster to the back court than a normal ceiling ball, he'll have to rush his shot.

What if the server is hitting a good, deep lob? An effective return is to volley or take the ball out of the air and drive the ball either down the line or cross court. Again, if you're late or early, you can still punch the ball up to the ceiling for an effective return. Of course, in

this case, you cannot contact the ball until it passes the five-foot line.

Breaking the Rhythm

The point of all these tactics is to make your opponent uncomfortable and break his rhythm. Rhythm breaking tactics can also be used during a rally. Here's my favorite. Consider the situation in Figure 1a. My opponent is X, I am O, and the arrow is the flight of the ball. It is clearly a set up which I can take off the back wall or volley with the backhand into the left corner. But there's an alternative (Figure 1b). Hit the ball in the air with the forehand into the left corner or down the right wall. In order to do this you'll have to rush at your opponent, maybe spin around in mid-air, and use a quick draw forehand to whip the ball from the hip. The first time you make this

"You can refine your tactics by varying the pace of each shot."

move, you'll probably bump into your opponent because he won't know what you are doing. But the next time the situation occurs, and you move in his direction, he'll move out of the way in hopes of avoiding the last embarrassment of running into you. With all of this extra room he's given you, you now have an even greater range of options than before.

As you see, court position is an important element of court tactics. When you set up behind your opponent at mid or three-quarter court, the typical response is to shoot or drive the ball down the right wall. But when you are that close to your opponent and behind him, he really can't see what you are doing. He normally leans to the right in anticipation of the shot down the line. He feels like a fool when he realizes the ball has gone in a different direction. The shot is easy to hit because the wall will impart a natural spin which will bring the ball down very fast.

You can refine your tactics by varying the pace of each shot. Hit three hard shots and then a medium speed change up. One of my favorite change up combinations is to hit a hard, sharp, pinch shot which literally squirts out of the corner because it contacts the side wall only a few inches from the front wall. All you hear is a "plunk" as the ball hits the side and front walls almost simultaneously. I combine this with a wide, medium speed pinch which contacts the side wall about two or three feet from the front wall. If my opponent sees the pinch coming, he remains frozen in disbelief because the ball is moving so slow

compared to my normal pinch. His feet can't decide to move while his eyes are watching the shot develop.

Along with all of these tactics, you must balance your offensive intensity (which is akin to a controlled rage) with patience. Try to force your game style onto your opponent. If you are more versatile than your opponent, choose a game style which clashes with his. For example, occasionally slow the power player down; use power against the slow, deliberate player. Let him know that you are going to make it as uncomfortable for him as possible every minute of the match.

Miscellaneous

Now we come to some must topics for rounding out your court tactics education. Some players have made the time out an art form. They use it to control the whole tempo of a match. The master of the time out was Charlie Brumfield. In the old days, he could get players to literally froth at the mouth just by taking very long 60-second time outs in which he would tell the gallery his life story.

The time out should be used primarily to stop your opponent's momentum. It should never be used when you are on a hot streak. You can use time outs to pace yourself, but you're really better off to get in better condition. If you are scoring one point after another without much resistance, you should increase the tempo of the game. Take just enough time to get ready to hit a drive serve. Don't waste a lot of time talking to the gallery at this time. You want to score as many points as you can before your opponent finds out that he should call a time out.

If you win a long rally, quickly get to the service box and get set to serve. This tends to unnerve your opponent. If you need to rest, do it in the ready service position so that your opponent is forced to wait for your serve or call a time out. If you respond automatically to this situation, your opponent will never discover that you're hurting just as much as he is.

The most unpleasant topic is how to deal with the cheater. What's a person to do when the other player picks up double bounces and shoves you all over the court while the referee just smiles? It really depends on how important winning is to you. For some people, a shrug of the shoulder is appropriate. But I believe in the law of the West. If the referee can't control the game, get a new referee. If that doesn't help, it's time for two eyes for each eye and two teeth for each tooth. The key is that you tell your opponent the ground rules that go into effect if the situation persists. You have to gain control of the situation. This also means that if you still get cheated, you accept the situation as is and don't get emotionally involved. Every point should be played with emotional detachment. 

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RELAXATION FOR RACQUETBALL

Part One—Basic Techniques

BY ROBERT L. MORASKY, PH.D.

Evidence from research at Montana State University shows that fine motor movements are improved when the muscles causing the movements are relaxed.

Some muscle tension is necessary in order for movement to take place, but not all muscle tension is necessary and desirable. When you lift your racquet, for example, the muscles that flex or bend the elbow must contract in order for the lifting movement to occur. But the extensors or muscles that straighten the elbow should be relaxed, not working in opposition to the lifting motion. You cannot have a smooth, efficient movement if both sets of muscles are contracting at the same time and countering each other. Also, consider the times you experience the overall tension that accompanies anxiety or fear before a big match. If your muscles are taut like a bow string, then smooth, coordinated movements will be difficult to achieve.

The answer in the above two examples is relaxation, so why not just tell yourself to relax? For most players, it's not so easy. Complete, deep muscle relaxation, like most other skills, must first be desired, and then learned through practice. The average racquetball player who hasn't had specific relaxation training, will probably not be able to "just relax" in those critical situations when it is needed. Of course, some players need to relax more than others, but, by and large, every player could use some sort of relaxation training to cope with performance conditions.

The most basic technique for achieving deep muscle relaxation involves tightening specific muscle groups to near maximum contraction, then relaxing completely and allowing the muscle to sink to its lowest possible state of relaxation. There are several things that you will learn as you practice and perfect this tighten-and-release exercise. First, you need to learn to recognize complete, deep relaxation. During the early sessions you will experience what seems to be total relaxation. In later sessions, however, you will discover that even deeper relaxation levels are possible. Second, you need to learn to identify the differences between a relaxed and a tense muscle. A relaxed muscle will

feel warm, heavy, tingly and it may seem to be sinking into the floor. A tense muscle will not provide these sensations. Once you can reliably achieve complete relaxation throughout your body, then you will be ready to build on the basic relaxation skills.

A word of caution before you actually begin: you can aggravate sore muscles, joints or bones if you force muscles to contract beyond a comfortable point. Use your own sense of well-being as a guide. This is not a contest and there are no special rewards for maximum contractions. Contract muscles slowly and carefully. Focus on the muscle or muscle group that is the target of your concentration and try to keep other muscles relaxed. For instance, when you contract the forearm muscles, try to keep the upper arm (biceps and triceps) loose and relaxed. You won't be able to do so entirely, but work on developing control over the specific muscle groups.

After contracting a muscle group and holding it for about five seconds, release it slowly and let it relax. Don't force relaxation. Stretching the muscle or shaking it won't help. Just let it slowly ease into a state of minimum tension. Feel the tension flow out of the muscle. Sense the heaviness as the tension flows away. Don't overdo attempts to relax a muscle; if it isn't fully relaxed after a contraction and release, then give it a couple more seconds to relax and go on to the next muscle group. You will find that muscles will continue to relax even though you are focusing your relaxation attempts elsewhere. If, after you have focused on all your muscles, a particular muscle is still tense, then come back to it and repeat the contraction and release exercise. The muscle will eventually relax. You will find that you improve at fully relaxing muscles in subsequent sessions.

With that background, let us begin a basic relaxation session. First make yourself comfortable. If you are sitting, you need to have a straight back, your head supported, your hands at your side or in your lap and both feet flat on the floor. If you can lie down on a carpeted floor, your relaxation will progress even better because you won't have to support the weight of your head in the prone position. There are some advantages in taking your shoes off to do the relaxation exercises, in order to avoid the pulling action on your leg muscles that is caused by the weight of your shoes. If you keep your shoes on, at least

loosen them so your feet are not constricted. Loosen your belt or tie, take off glasses and watch or other jewelry. Close your eyes.

Most racquetball players like to start with their hands although you should experiment once or twice by beginning with the feet. Close your hand slowly to make a fist. Clench it as tight as you can, then release it slowly. Feel the tension flow out of your hand as your fingers straighten. Pause for a bit while the tension continues to flow away, then go on to the next muscle group. The following muscle groups should be relaxed:

Right arm first, then left arm:

- hand
- arm
- shoulder

Neck and head

- neck and base of the skull
- forehead
- nose
- eyes
- mouth

Left leg, then right leg

- foot
- calf
- thigh

Torso

- buttocks (both together)
- abdomen
- chest

Most muscles can be simply tensed and relaxed, but there are a couple that warrant special mention. Because of the relationship of the back and neck muscles to the vertebrae, you should be especially careful with them. Contract the neck muscles only lightly. You will notice that we don't suggest that the back muscles be contracted at all. They will relax markedly with the rest of the body and you will actively relax them with advanced techniques—but not yet.

The anatomy of your hands and feet are different, so you cannot contract them in the same way. Your hands can be curled into fists and clenched tightly, but an attempt at the same action with your feet will only result in a painful muscle cramp. Don't curl your toes or foot—simply contract the muscles in place without any joint movement. It sometimes helps to think of "toes-ball-arch-heel" when contracting foot muscles.

Your face, like your feet, can be subdivided into parts for special attention, but contracting and releasing each part separately is not

Editor's note: The author is a professor in psychology at Montana State University. This is the first of a four-part series.



Most racquetball players start relaxation techniques with their entire arms—including fingers. Close your hand slowly to make a fist. Clench it as tight as you can, then release it slowly.



Another relaxation exercise to help get rid of stress is to skrunch up your forehead and eyes, wrinkle up your nose and purse your lips together before relaxing the muscles.

necessary. Skrunch up your forehead and eyes, wrinkle up your nose, ball up your cheeks, purse your lips—all together. Make a ridiculous, funny face. Laugh at yourself a little bit... but enjoy the remarkable feeling of a relaxed face. Many people carry a lot of their emotional tension as muscle tension in their faces. Relaxing the muscles of your face can be a real joy at special times like just before leaving the locker room for that big match.

Keep in mind that total body relaxation, like relaxation of the face, should feel good. You can expect to experience a weightless, detached, floating feeling when relaxation becomes complete and deep. Some individuals have reported a sense of fear or panic once they recognize the floating feeling. You can be assured that you are in no danger—it may be simply a new and unusual feeling for you. You will not enter a trance or hypnotic state from which you can't return nor will your personality be altered in some mysterious, undesirable way. At any time you wish, you will be able to stop the relaxation exercise and be as normal as ever. However, after a few sessions you can expect to be in a more relaxed state throughout your day. Many athletes with whom we've worked have reported some carry-over of relaxation into their everyday activities—which in turn helps their athletic performance.

Before discussing the specific application of the basic relaxation techniques to racquetball, we should consider two other aspects of relaxation exercises: breathing and sleepiness. In a later article we will elaborate on some specific strategies for using breathing to help you relax, but for now simply do the

following: 1) breathe through your nose, 2) make your breaths slow, full and regular, 3) use your abdomen and stomach areas as well as your chest to breathe. In regard to sleepiness—try to maintain an alert, clear mind. Letting sleep take over at this stage of your training will hinder mental exercises you will be doing later. If drowsiness becomes overwhelming, simply decide to terminate the relaxation exercise for a short period of time, sleep for 10 or 15 minutes, then resume the exercise. You shouldn't assume that sleep and relaxation are the same thing—many people grind their teeth or clench their jaw during sleep—that's hardly relaxation. Choosing the proper time to relax may help alleviate the sleepiness problem.

An excellent time to practice the relaxation exercise is an hour or so before playing racquetball. You may have a little trouble getting into a competitive gear if you get involved with deep muscle relaxation immediately before a match, so avoid that practice. If you do the relaxation exercise an hour before playing, you will be able to feel fully vitalized by game time while still carrying the best parts of the relaxed feeling with you onto the court.

If you have a tense, stressful day and there just isn't time to fully relax before your racquetball game, you can do parts of the total exercise. Even while sitting in the locker room you can contract and release your face, arms and shoulders. If you are already on the court without having relaxed, use the warm-up period as a partial relaxation period. Slamming forehand and backhand kill shots with muscles that were already tense from emo-

tional stress is probably not the best way to prepare yourself for a sharp, heads-up, controlled game. If worst comes to worst, and you realize halfway through the game that overall muscle tension is making your overrun the ball, overhit your shots, and lose concentration, then use time outs and the short periods between serves to work on tightening and relaxing various parts of your body—starting with your racquet hand.

Earlier, mention was made of the need to practice in order to learn effective relaxation techniques. If you do the muscle contraction and release exercises twice a week or every other day, you should expect to be close to mastering the technique in six to eight sessions. Of course, there is no reason why you should not do the exercise every day but that is determined by your own level of motivation.

The major purpose of this first phase of Performance Relaxation For Racquetball is to teach you to recognize what relaxation feels like so that you can tell the difference between a muscle that is relaxed and one that isn't. You may or may not see some improvement in your game depending on how quickly you pick up the relaxation techniques and how much you practice and use them. The important outcome of this phase is to make you ready to go on to Phase Two in which further (and different) relaxation techniques are learned that have direct use on the racquetball court. Phases Three and Four, which zero in on your racquetball game, cannot be useful to you without good ground work in basic relaxation techniques.



1ST ANNUAL
SUCCESSFUL
TOURNAMENT

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR OWN TOURNAMENT

BY RHONDA WILSON

The fifth annual Hydro-Dig Racquetball Tournament in Anaheim, Calif. is not likely to be covered in all the major racquetball publications. Its top competitors aren't nationally-recognized racquetball players. They are barely recognizable around Anaheim. But to the 100 or so employees, customers and suppliers of the company who gather each April at the local Sports Gallery—the tournament turns out to be one heck of a good time.

At tournament time in April, Hydro-Dig Landscapes closes its doors for a day to hold a racquetball tournament. The company picks up the tab for almost half of the expenses while sponsors take care of the rest. The bill comes to about \$1,200. DP Leach supplies key chains and bracket charts. Trophies are donated by local sponsors. And to top it all off, participants do not have to pay an entry fee.

Planning a racquetball tournament for one's own company or organization is not that difficult to do. But by knowing what to do ahead of time, most problems can be avoided. In fact, if done properly, the time involved to plan a successful tournament can be relatively minimal.

The expense of planning a racquetball tournament can range from little cost to almost \$2,000, depending on how fancy you want to get. However, if an adequate number of sponsors are contacted, most of the cost can be defrayed and entry fees kept to a reasonable rate.

The first step is to find a location and set a date for the tournament. Most racquetball clubs are more than willing to host your tournament. After all, the publicity in local newspapers and from fliers sent to the employees of a company as large as Lockheed or an organization such as the Kiwanis Club generates potential memberships.

According to Gary Williams, founder of Creative Tournaments in Glendale, Calif., and organizer of about 60 tournaments a year, groups that want to hold tournaments are more inclined to be accepted by private clubs. Most private clubs have a steady income from monthly membership dues. Public clubs, on the other hand, are more likely to lose money if they tie up their courts and facilities with outside tournament participants.

Weekends as well as week days from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. are usually the best times to schedule a tournament with a club. Clubs should be contacted at least nine weeks in advance of the proposed tournament date.

The cost of holding a tournament can vary. Each participant should expect to pay \$2 to \$5 for the use of the club, \$3 to \$6 for tournament t-shirts, \$2 for trophies or prizes, \$3 to \$5 for hospitality (food and drink) and between \$1 and \$2 for fliers to publicize the event. The total entry fee range can be estimated at \$11-20. However, if some items are donated, entry fees could possibly run as low as \$5 per

"The expense of planning a tournament can range from very little cost to \$2,000, depending on how fancy you want to get."

person. Any profits made during the tournament can be put in a reserve fund for the next tournament, or for a company party. Then again, if the company or organization is picking up the tab, participants don't have to worry about any costs at all.

The next step is to find sponsors to help defray costs. In exchange for publicity on tournament t-shirts and fliers, prizes for the tournaments are often donated by local supermarkets, sports clothing manufacturers, liquor companies, local restaurants, sporting goods stores, stereo shops, perfume companies, department stores, or amusement parks. Door prizes are sometimes donated by the clubs themselves. Montclair Racquet and Fitness Center in Montclair, Calif., for example, offers gift certificates for its pro shop, discount memberships and free court time. "We like to have those people come back and be involved again," says Harold Wright, manager.

Jim Carson, founder of Jim Carson Tourna-

ments in Costa Mesa, Calif., says potential sponsors are often found within your own company or organization. Someone within the company might be related or a close friend of a restaurant owner who would donate the food or a store owner who would donate prizes.

Major racquetball companies such as AMF Voit and Ektelon do not have a blanket policy on which tournaments they will sponsor. Both companies say they are inundated weekly with phone calls for sponsorships and both review requests on an individual basis.

According to Bob Larsen of AMF Voit, his company will only sponsor tournaments in clubs which have supported Voit's product line in the past year. If this is the case, he says, balls, racquets and bags are provided at a half price promotion rate.

Ektelon requires each organization to write a letter asking for tournament sponsorship. "We're looking for people who want to help the sport of racquetball and not people who are just trying to get something out of you," says Armen Keteyian, who handles public relations for Ektelon. "We're also looking for target cities where Ektelon can improve sales and have a high visibility."

Ektelon, which sponsors about 50 outside organization tournaments a year, prefers to be the exclusive sponsor. Ektelon donates balls, racquets, bags, warm-up suits, eyeguards and gloves. It will also donate tournament shirts with its logo on the front because shirts provide the best form of sponsor recognition.

Once sponsors have been secured, obtaining publicity should be the next order of business. Entry forms should be distributed to employees or members of an organization at least eight weeks in advance. To save on mailing costs, the fliers can be circulated in employee paychecks or posted on bulletin boards. Organizations can get the word out through newsletters or at meetings.

The next step in tournament preparation is to decide on what kind of hospitality will be served. Providing food and drinks at tournaments are optional since many clubs have adequate snack bars and the business generates revenue for the club. But there are

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR OWN TOURNAMENT

inexpensive ways to provide additional refreshments.

Williams says some supermarkets provide complimentary one-day-old fruit. Athletic drinks and even beer can be donated by their respective companies. And, of course, a local deli or restaurant may donate food in return for its name on the tournament shirt and the entry forms. Banners can also be posted at the event acknowledging the food and drink sponsors.

Another good idea is to arrange with a restaurant for menu specials at discount prices for tournament players.

Foods that do not have to be kept warm such as cold-cut sandwiches, potato and macaroni salads and fruit are recommended for tournament players. Yogurt is another popular choice.

Williams says the food selection is more important than it might appear. "Tournament players like to be able to put their food on their plate and walk around," he says. "Pizza probably wouldn't work."

Tournament t-shirts also add a nice touch to tournaments. Small, medium and large shirts should be ordered. Colored t-shirts

costs about \$50 per dozen. However, there are some clothing manufacturers who might donate the shirts, especially companies which might be looking for ways to penetrate the racquetball market.

"Food selection is more important than it might appear."

If an interested company is found, Williams says it might be a good idea to have the company stock the club's pro shop with their racquetball apparel during the weekend of the tournament. This way the company will receive adequate exposure.

The biggest worry during the event is controlling the tournament desk. You need to have a tournament director who can make decisions when there are arguments and keep the flow of the event running. The director needs assistance in setting up the

draw, assigning court times, giving out the t-shirts, getting the waiver releases signed, and so on.

According to club owners, their biggest problem is the stealing of towels. Tournament organizers should arrange for their players to provide their own towels or to reimburse the club for lost towels.

Results from the tournament should be sent to the racquetball magazines and local newspapers. The tournament director should also make sure the company newsletter carries the results. "We run at least a paragraph of winners from every tournament sent to us," says Ben Kalb, editor of *Racquetball Illustrated*. "But most people don't take the time to send us the information. They think it will automatically appear in our magazine by osmosis. They don't realize that we don't even know their tournament exists unless they send us the results."

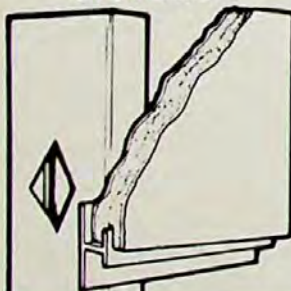
Finally, thank-you notes should be sent to anyone who contributed their services to the tournament. This note should also mention next year's event. A little note goes a long way in getting your sponsors for the following year.



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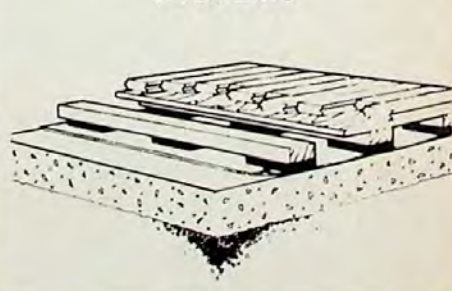
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Rx FOR WINNING

Self-Defense with a Racquet

BY TAK KUBOTA



Actress-martial artist Karen Sheperd shows how the side of a racquetball racquet can be a potent weapon as she defends herself from an attack from behind by martial arts instructor Tak Kubota. A hard blow to the head with the side of the racquet will temporarily fend off an attacker.

Although racquetball racquets have never been advertised or sold as instruments to use over someone's head, sometime, someday, somewhere that racquet could come in handy outside the confines of a racquetball court.

I don't think anybody advocates using a racquet as a weapon to out-and-out attack someone. But it may come in handy in terms of self-defense. That is, prevention of an attack.

Use of a racquetball racquet is similar to how police use their batons. Like a baton, a racquet is small, so it is easy to swing quickly. It is also heavy enough to temporarily stop an attacker.

Probably the best thing about a racquet is its versatility. You have several different racquet parts to work with. The strings, for example, can be used to block an attack with a knife or an attacker who is throwing a punch at you. The butt of the racquet is good for poking someone in the stomach or neck, thereby setting the stage for a follow-up blow with the side of the racquet. The butt is used for striking when you are a short distance from the attacker.

The side of the racquet is your most potent attack weapon. The side of the racquet can be a devastating blow to an attacker. The force behind your swing—just as the force you use in a racquetball swing on the court—has a lot of power behind it. It also allows you to keep distance from the attacker.

You can even use the wrist thong to trap an opponent's finger. A hard twist combined with the right amount of pressure will break the finger.

Any part of the racquet can be used to attack any part of the body. No one is asking you to be choosy here.

One problem that may come up during an attack is the lack of a weapon—your racquet. You may have placed it in your racquetball bag—a common place for it. No problem, here. You attack with your bag first, then take your racquet out and follow-up. This has to be done rather quickly. You can't tell your attacker to hold on for a minute while you try and find your racquet. If the first attack with the bag doesn't immobilize the attacker, keep hitting the attacker with the bag or use some strategic kicking techniques until you have time to get the racquet out.

On these pages, we have given you an idea of how a racquetball racquet can be used as a means of self-defense. But one thing is important. You don't want to stay around and find out how the attacker is feeling, or even stay around and continue trying to attack.

The purpose of self-defense is to avoid the attack, thereby preventing yourself from getting seriously injured or killed. If you stay around, the attacker will continue to attack. After you have temporarily immobilized the attacker, get in your car and drive away. Or return to the club and call the police.



The butt of the racquet can also halt an attack. An attack from behind leaves the groin area vulnerable. After jabbing the assailant with the butt of the racquet, you can follow up with a blow to the head.

Editor's note: The author is a martial arts instructor in Los Angeles who has taught self-defense to the Los Angeles Police Academy and members of the FBI. He is the author of several self-defense books.

Rx FOR WINNING



In this case, you have left the club with your racquet in the outside pocket of your racquetball bag. If the attack comes from the side, you can use your free arm to pull out the racquet and defend yourself.

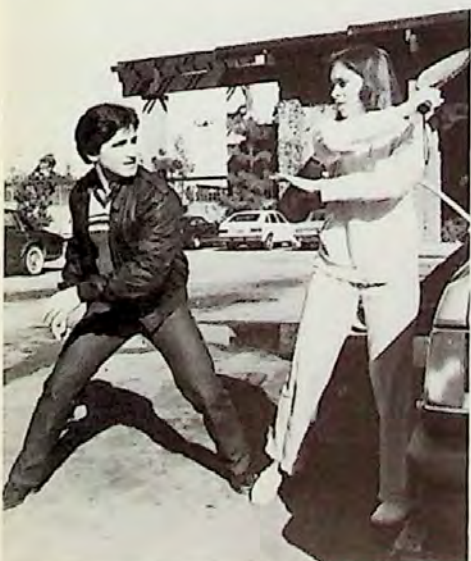


Many bags aren't made with outside pockets, so if the racquet is stuck somewhere deep down in your bag, you will need a little more

time to reach for it. A kick to the stomach or groin will immobilize the attacker long enough for you to grab your racquet.



Martial artist Joe Randazzo attacks Karen by choking her from the front. Karen retaliates by striking his ribs with the head of the racquet. A follow-up strike with the side of the racquet is encouraged here.



If the attacker wants to throw a punch, a backhand across the nose should stop the attacker for the moment. As with all self-defense movements, you should not stay around. Drive away or return to the club and call the police.



racquetball

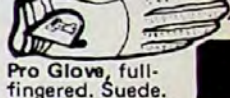


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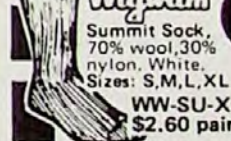
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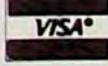
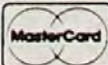


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TOURNAMENTS

SCHOEBER'S CLASSIC

BY BOB SMITH

Ed Andrews and Mark Martino entered the \$10,000 Olympia/Wilson Christmas Classic at Schoeber's Racquetball Spa in Pleasanton, Calif. with one purpose in mind: "Beat the boys from the Catalina tour and beat them convincingly." And so they did, winding up in the finals before Andrews won, 15-9, 15-9.

Five pros from the controversial Catalina invitational tour entered the tournament and only one, Bret Harnett, made it as far as the semis. The rest lost to Andrews, Martino or Steve Lerner, three players not on the 12-man tour.

"A win here was as much a victory over the system as it was over any individual player," said Andrews afterwards. "We can't take the tour to court so our only avenue is to beat the pros at every given opportunity."

Top seed Jerry Hilecher fell to Andrews, 15-10, 12-15, 11-7 in the quarters. Second seed Rich Wagner was forced to forfeit a quarter final match to Martino as a result of a painful neck injury. Third seed Harnett lost a hard fought battle to a well-conditioned Martino, 15-11, 8-15, 11-1 in the semis. Fourth seed Craig McCoy, somewhat hobbled by a knee injury, fell prey to Lerner in the quarters, 15-4, 15-5. Fifth seeded Scott Hawkins lost to Lerner, 15-10, 12-15, 11-9.

The scrappy Lerner met his fate in the semis, losing to Andrews, 15-4, 15-5.

This was the 13th meeting between Andrews and Martino, defending AARA national doubles champions and traveling companions. The older Andrews had held an 11 to 1 edge over the hard-hitting Martino going into the contest.

Martino jumped off to early leads in both games only to surrender his advantages in the late going. Andrews' scoring streaks seemed to come as a result of his ability to successfully slow down the tempo of his game. Lob Z serves to Martino's forehand worked best.

The second game was a lot closer than the score would indicate as Martino matched Andrews point for point throughout most of the match until several foot fault calls distracted him long enough for Andrews to finish out the scoring.

"I think the difference in our games is experience," said Martino. "It takes me several points to adjust to a trend whereas Ed's experience allows him to adjust much quicker."

The women's pro finals delighted the standing room only audience with one of the best matches of the tournament. The contest pitted number one seed, Lynn Adams, against second seeded Karen



Mark Martino shoots one from back court against Ed Andrews in the men's finals of Schoeber's Classic won by Andrews, 15-9, 15-9. Bottom: Lynn Adams rolls one out on her way to defeating Karin Walton-Trent, 12-15, 15-9, 11-2, in women's finals.



Walton-Trent.

A purposeful Walton-Trent won the first game 15-12 after the contest was deadlocked at 12-12. Her final three points came after a controversial two bounce call went against Adams, who appeared distracted by the verdict. Adams attributed this lack of composure to a five-month lay-off in which she felt she had lost her tournament toughness.

The second game saw Walton-Trent jump out to an early 3-0 lead on three Adams' miscues. Adams got the serve back on a Walton-Trent skip and proceeded to reel off six unanswered points. From this point on, it was all Adams as she finished out the second game 15-9 and waltzed through the tie-breaker 11-2. This victory avenged a 16-14, 15-0 defeat to Walton-Trent in the semis of this same

tournament last year.

The match was punctuated by a series of long rallies, which at times saw an agile Adams leave her feet for a few spectacular gets.

"I'm not real fond of diving," said Adams, "but at times she left me no choice. She played really well." Adams defeated Jennifer Harding, 15-12, 15-4, and Walton-Trent beat Fran Davis, 15-3, 15-8, in the semis.

Andrews collected \$1,500 and Martino picked up \$750. Adams won \$1,200 and Walton-Trent earned \$600.

The men's pro doubles was won by the team of Davey Bledsoe and McCoy, neither of whom got past the quarterfinals in their singles efforts. The pair topped Steve Trent and Stan Wright, 15-5, 15-13.

Adams and boyfriend/coach Jim Carson won the pro mixed doubles, 15-3, 15-3, over Sylvia Hooks and Bob Dziedzic.

Bill Rissel defeated Scott Morey, 15-8, 15-9, and Mary Pessagno beat Lori Gilliam, 14-16, 15-0, 11-8, in the open division singles finals.

Using a unique front-wall glass setup, the tournament was filmed by ESPN for coverage into the San Francisco Bay Area.

ETC.

● Bobby Stocker defeated John Mack, 21-4, 19-21, 11-9, to win the \$150 top prize in Creative Tournaments' Silver Dollar Open at the Los Alamitos (Calif.) Racquet Club. Clay Hollingsworth won the A division. Chang Hwan Han and Shawn Williams won the B divisions. Jay Corbett won the veteran and seniors divisions and Vance Lerner took the masters title. Guy Texeira and C. Brysman won the open doubles, and Texeira teamed with M. Drexler for the mixed doubles crown.

● Steve Lerner defeated Dave Bush, 21-17, 21-15, and Terri Gilreath defeated Cindy Moore, 21-12, 21-10, to win the open divisions of the La Casa De Vida tournament in Torrance, Calif. Lerner won a Minolta camera and Gilreath took home a Magnavox color television. Other division winners included Ray Medina, Chang Hwan Han, Jay Stevenson, Larry Beck, Diane Sutherland, Guy Texeira-C. Brysman, and Fithie-Moore.

● Tom Norris defeated Chris Williford, 11-15, 16-14, 11-1, in the men's open finals of the Turkey Shoot at the Tulsa (Okla.) Racquetball Club. Joyce Jackson, a former pro on the women's tour, lost to Norris in the semifinals. Melinda Shaver won the women's open by defeating Carol

Goddard, 15-6, 15-13. Advanced division champs were Deborah Pickard and Bill Severns.

● Steve Rubin, Mario Mejias, Brett Shevack and Nancy O'Connor were division winners in the Winter Tournament at Racquetball Fifth Avenue in New York City.

● Dave Peck defeated Marty Hogan, 10-11, 11-9, 11-4, 5-11, 11-7, in the finals of the Natural Light Pro-Am at the Holiday Racquet Club in Bangor, Maine. Peck defeated Mike Yellen and Hogan topped Craig McCoy in the semis. Peck won \$4,000 and Hogan collected \$2,000.

● Mike Levine defeated Ruben Gonzalez, 21-10, 21-2, and Fran Davis defeated Barb Maltby, 21-14, 11-21, 11-2, in the pro divisions of the Natural Light Classic at the All-Sport Club in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Cliff Swain and Tammy Hajjar won the A divisions. Levine and Leo Marsocci took the open doubles.

● Corey Brysman defeated Jimmy Flannery and Laura Albano beat Carol Montalbo in the 18-under finals of the South Bay Junior Racquetball Classic at the West End Racquetball Club in Torrance, Calif. The tournament was part of the five-stop Seamco/Southern California Racquetball Association Winter Grand Prix.

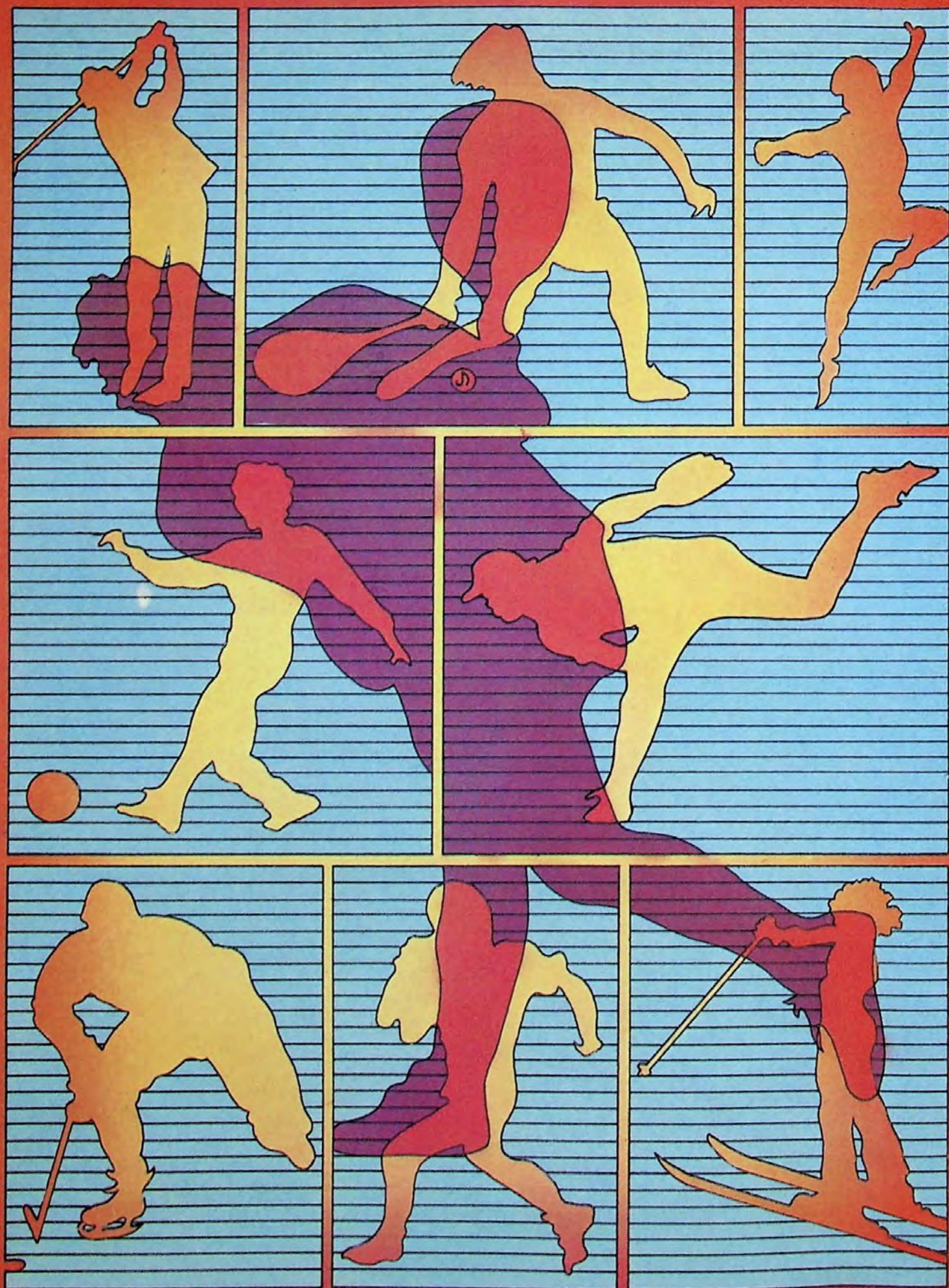
EKTELON-PONY REGIONALS

(Remaining Events)

Columbus, Ohio	Racqueteer Club 501 Morrison Road Gahanna, OH 43230	March 4-7
San Francisco, California	Schoeber's Racquetball 5341 Hopyard Road Pleasanton, CA 94566	March 4-7
Atlanta, Georgia	The Racquet House 4951 Lower Roswell Road Marietta, GA 30067	March 5-7
Denver, Colorado	Denver Sporting Club 5151 DTC Parkway Englewood, CO 80111	March 10-14
Indianapolis, Indiana	Racquets Four Sports Centre 4002 E. Southport Road Indianapolis, IN 46227	March 12-14
Los Angeles/Orange County, California	Los Caballeros Racquet & Sports 17272 Newhope Street Fountain Valley, CA 92708	March 18-21
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Southridge Racquetball 6815 W. Edgerton Avenue Greenfield, WI 53220	March 19-21
Seattle, Washington	Seattle Athletic Club 333 NE 97th Avenue Seattle, WA 98115	March 25-28
Phoenix, Arizona	La Mancha Racquet Club 8221 North 23rd Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85021	March 26-28
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Fort Washington Racquetball Club 469 Pennsylvania Avenue Fort Washington, PA 19034	March 26-28
Detroit, Michigan	Coliseum II Racquet Club 8715 Telegraph Road Taylor, MI 48180	March 26-28

NATIONAL FINALS

Anaheim, California	Sports Gallery 2560 East Katella Anaheim, CA 92800	May 5-9
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PLAYING RACQUETBALL: WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM OTHER SPORTS

BY MARK KESSINGER

When racquetball first took off in popularity, most instructors were players who had a natural ability—a knack for the game—but little in the way of teaching skills. Teaching the game to others was easy as long as the student had the same athletic knack and could pick things up easily. When the game's popularity skyrocketed, the teaching pro had more to worry about. He had to find a way to make these new students learn the game whether they had the knack or not. In fact, the player who didn't have natural ability was the one who needed instruction most.

Western culture coaches and instructors have taught that the best way to develop game skills is to practice those things which are part of that game. If you want to be good at basketball, practice dribbling and shooting. If you want to be a good football player, practice blocking and tackling. But this may be the wrong attitude. Perhaps more can be learned from taking bits and pieces from other sports.

When racquetball was evolving, many instructors were hard pressed to find a common language. The sport was so new, so different from most other sports, that players did not have a good idea of what they were to do. The instructor was forced to find some middle ground for teaching good racquetball concepts. He or she was forced to take bits and pieces from other sports.

It would be easy if everyone had played handball, the game closest to racquetball in nature, but most people didn't. In fact, even fewer had heard of handball than racquetball. The golfer, football player and skier had never touched a racquetball racquet before, so it was up to the pro to explain the fundamentals in a way the student could understand. The successful instructor did it by finding similarities between racquetball and other sports, no matter how remote.

The martial arts and racquetball are similar in relation to balance and relaxation. Ballet, dance, and gymnastics also show the prin-

ciples of balance, extension and counterweight.

The iron cross in men's gymnastics competition is one of the most difficult events to perform, yet it can be applied to racquetball. It is done by hanging between the rings with arms fully extended out from the shoulders. The body forms a cross. The movement is difficult because it deprives the gymnast of leverage and use of his skeletal structure. Hanging straight down from the rings, the gymnast can rest on his bones and joints with his muscles fighting the fatigue and gravity. Leaning on his arms, the gymnast can lock his elbows and let his skeletal structure

"This movement is the same swing used in baseball or softball."

support him all day. But with his arms in the iron cross position, he has no leverage at all and can remain in the position only as long as his strength holds out. He is balanced between the rings with his effort transferred as far away from the center of gravity as possible; an over-developed specific group of muscles compensate, but only for a few minutes at the most.

In racquetball, this example of leverage and center of gravity can be applied in the arm swing. We do not have a long, heavy racquet as in tennis, which has to be balanced by leaning backwards and keeping the arms straight during the swing. The lighter racquetball racquet should be handled closer to the center of balance. This demands a short swing with a bent elbow and a flexible wrist. The further away from the center of balance the racquet is swung, the less leverage is applied. Thus "reaching" for the ball not only feels awkward, but is a weak and imbalanced effort.

Leverage is why the power zone is where it is; the closer the racquet is swung to that center of self, the more leverage is applied. More leverage means more power and control. The power zone is below the waist and takes place within the stance of the feet. It is more effective within the width of the shoulders, so a wide stance is counter-productive unless you are stepping into the ball and closing your stance by drawing up the back leg. If the ball is struck outside the power zone, it involves reach and probably has left the player off-balance in the follow-through causing a slower recovery.

If the ball is low to the ground and you are attempting a power kill, the knees must be bent and you must lean forward, almost over the ball, as your swing arcs downward past your ankles. Bending the knees while leaning over slightly keeps the center of balance in proper perspective for a low shot. With diving, on the other hand, the racquet is as far away from the center of balance as possible, and completely outside the stance of the two flying feet.

Another stumbling block for the racquetball player is to determine how to automatically line up the ball inside the power zone at the right moment. Perhaps, we can take a lesson from soccer on this one in which the ideas of balance and a power zone also apply.

In soccer, a bad swing with the foot will dump the player on his soft parts every time. To line up the shot in soccer, the player automatically steps beside the ball with his lead foot, following through with his kick. His kicking foot glides right beside his supporting leg and into the ball in the power zone. Contact is easier and more of a reflex, since the kick movement will always be the same as long as the lead foot lines up the ball in the same way. In racquetball, the player must learn to line up his body with the ball in the same manner, by stepping beside the ball. If the player places the ball just inside his lead foot as the swing begins, the ball will be met in the power zone by the racquet head. Stepping beside the ball not only aligns the ball in proper position to the body and stroke,

Editor's note: The last of a two-part series on Zen and the Art of Racquetball Playing.

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PLAYING RACQUETBALL

but also adds to the momentum of the stroke.

The inside of the lead foot is the same no matter what the stroke or whether you are left or right handed. For a forehand stroke, the lead foot steps beside the ball, or point of contact, while the ball is approaching. If the player steps with the outside of his foot facing the ball, he will be off balance, hitting the ball in an awkward move outside the power zone. Leverage and balance is lost. For a backhand shot, the same is true. The forward foot should be on the same side as the racquet hand, and contact should be made inside the foot.

This method of aligning the ball is not perfect. A spin, mistake in timing, or an unexpected bounce will leave the ball outside the power zone. But understanding the zone and how to line up with the ball will allow the player to correct the internal factor in his game: his own form.

Other parallels are available depending on

crucial factors of trunk, hip and shoulder rotation during the shot. Momentum is important in powering the shot, and full rotation is important to building up momentum.

Another fact which racquetball players tend to overlook is that their arms are attached to their bodies at the shoulders. This means that during the swing and follow-through the arms cannot continue indefinitely in any direction. They must slow down and stop while still remaining close to the body. The best way for the arms to begin and end their full range of motion is by staying close to the center of gravity. A bent arm will let the racquet remain closer to the center than a straight arm. The weight of the racquet does not justify a straight arm swing or follow-through. Ideally, the swing begins with the arm bent and the racquet just off the shoulder. During the swing, it arcs downward towards the center of balance and into the power

"Ballet, dance and gymnastics show the principles of balance, extension and counterweight"

the sport at which you look and the elements of the game which you need to improve. Racquetball is a sideways game, one in which the player faces the sides of the court while shooting the ball. Therefore, you should stand perpendicular to how you want to return the ball. Never face it head on. It is possible to hit the ball well and accurately facing the front of the court but only after many subtle and intricate adjustments are made to compensate.

The human body is constructed so that a rotation of the torso, hips and shoulders aid the arms in completing their longest and strongest arc of movement: the lateral swing. This arc of movement is the same swing used in baseball or softball and tennis. Rotation of the trunk, shoulders and hips should help relieve the strain on the knee: the easiest joint to injure in sports. The knees should not take the strain of the swing. They act primarily in making the adjustment between the rotating torso and the forward moving feet. Lack of utilizing the torso in the rotation can account for the lack of power some players feel despite a wicked swing, brutal snap of the wrist and a hundred dollar racquet.

The sideways address to the ball allows the full swing of the arms in this lateral arc around the center of balance. A full range of motion allows for another Western concept: momentum. Momentum of the racquet is the single most important factor in applying power to the shot. However, in thinking of the racquet as a part instead of an extension of the center of balance permits the player to ignore the

zone. During the follow-through, the racquet head follows the path of the shot for a short distance and then stress demands that the arm continue in an arc close to the body. The racquet should end up wrapping around about elbow-waist high. The best rule of thumb is to do whatever feels natural. But you must first become aware of the most natural positions and movements for each stroke.

This principal of balance in sending force away from the body is applied in archery. The body is always in a perpendicular stance to the force that is about to be sent out. This stance insures maximum balance for accuracy and steadiness. The step is added to gather momentum towards the on-coming ball, just as in baseball. The rotation of the hips, shoulders and torso add centrifugal force to speed the racquet head. The arc of the swing from shots down through the power zone and back below the opposing shoulder is to gain full range of motion to build momentum, just as in the arc of a good golf swing.

These relationships between other sports and racquetball are not mere coincidences. Understanding them and the principles they have in common will supply the player with a body of knowledge which he can apply towards game improvement. It also serves to show the player that to understand the principles of other sports is an aid in learning to understand racquetball. The game of racquetball may be unique and a first racquet sport to some beginners, but it does not have to be unfathomable.



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COLLEGE COURTS



University of Iowa Fieldhouse

University of Iowa

A \$3.5 million face-lift at the University of Iowa's athletic fieldhouse is due to be completed in the spring of 1983. Construction at the Iowa City campus will include 10 racquetball courts to add to the 15 existing campus courts.

The restored fieldhouse will also include an elevated indoor jogging track, an exercise facility for handicapped students and four activity rooms for martial arts, wrestling and dance.

"The demand is such that we haven't been able to accommodate people who want to play," says Harry Ostrander, director of recreational services. "I've noticed as far as an individual activity, racquetball is ranking above tennis. There has been quite a drastic reduction of the amount of people who play tennis."

Members of the Hawkeye football team that led the university into the Rose Bowl this year are active racquetball players. Defensive back Bobby Stoops and linebacker Todd Simonsen are two players who often spend time on the courts. The university also has a well known graduate, Paul Krause, who drops by the campus to play racquetball now that his playing days are over with the NFL Minnesota Vikings.

Top racquetball players on the campus are Bill Riker, Brian Harder and Jay Reinsma.

University of Mississippi

The four racquetball courts at the University of Mississippi in Oxford aren't enough, so the university is installing 10 more courts in an \$8 million physical education facility that will be completed in January of 1983.

"Racquetball is one of the more popular

sports on campus," says Leon Garrett, chairman of the health and physical education department. "We are anticipating an increased utilization of both racquetball and handball."

The facility will also include an indoor swimming pool, basketball courts, an auditorium, lab space and classrooms.

The existing courts are utilized during the mornings for instruction and in the afternoons and evenings for recreation.

UC Berkeley

Twenty-two new racquetball courts were originally proposed at the University of California at Berkeley. But due to lack of funds, the students will have to settle for nine glass back wall courts in a \$19 million intramural sports facility to be completed in 1984.

The new courts will be a welcome addition to the eight underground racquetball courts that were built in 1958.

"We're building what we can afford," says James Turman, director of the sports club program.

Berkeley's 50-member racquetball club belongs to the Northern California Intercollegiate Racquetball League. Other schools in the league include UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, University of San Francisco and San Jose State. The league competes each weekend January through March to determine the championship. Berkeley took first place two years ago but UC Santa Cruz took the top spot last year.

Racquetball club president is Mark Emmerson.

Top men players at the University include Jim Anderson, Bob Mazzeo and John Vendeland. The top women players are Mallory Lynch, Lisa Yamashiro and Roxie Bardwell.



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Kathy can hit away in Jordache's purple and pink three-quarter reversible sleeve shirt made of polyester and cotton, **\$14**. The top goes well with pink cotton twill pipe shorts, **\$20**. Steve does his playing in a Jordache red, white and blue zipper shirt made of a poly/cotton interlock, **\$16**. Red twill pipe shorts, **\$20**. Jo Dean has on Jordache's white and purple baseball shirt made of a poly/cotton interlock, **\$17**. White poplin shorts, **\$17**. Jordache Superior Court shoes (see action photo) made of mesh, suede and leather, **\$27**.



Steve has on an outfit made by Great American Shirt Co. The khaki and white stripe top is made of 50 percent cotton and 50 percent polyester, **\$13**. The white shorts sports blue stripes and a back pocket and is made of 65 percent Kodel polyester and 35 percent cotton woven twill, **\$9**.



Kathy cheers on the other players in her gray and pink warmup suit made by Winning Ways. The top is gray with pink stripes across the chest and features a zippered collar. The pants are pink with gray stripes. Made of acrylic cotton, **\$39**. Joe has on Cal Sport's rugby pullover made of 100 percent Orion fleece. With snap front placket, **\$35**.



Bonnie looks fine in Jordache's purple (with white and pink trim) hockey shirt made of a poly/cotton interlock, **\$17**. White poplin shorts, **\$20**.



Bonnie shares a drink in her powder blue full sleeve interlock top made by Cal Sport, \$17, and her matching poly/cotton interlock shorts with cover seam pockets and top stitched elastic waistband, \$11. Steve takes his break in Great American Shirt's white, red and blue top made of 50 percent Kodel polyester and 50 percent cotton needleout interlock, \$12.50. Matching shorts made of polyester and cotton woven twill, \$9.



Wilson's blue and white top made of 65 percent polyester and 35 percent cotton is another of Joe's racquetball choices, \$14. Matching nylon cotton shorts, 10.

Jo Dean high steps it in Cal Sport's sleeveless top made of 50 percent polyester and 50 percent cotton. Features a rib knit collar, reinforced v-placket and accent trim, \$16. Wine velour sport short with drawstring, \$16. Joe does his jumping in Great American's Shirt's cranberry, silver and white warmup made of 100 percent Dupont Orlon fleece. Top, \$26, bottoms \$21. Bonnie has on Winning Ways' raspberry and white poly/cotton top, \$20, and raspberry shorts, \$14.



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CLUB NEWS



SEATTLE ATHLETIC CLUB Seattle, Washington

When thinking about a racquetball club, wine tasting, ski trips and river raft excursions aren't activities that immediately come to mind. But at the Seattle Athletic Club in Seattle, Wash., members will have the regular opportunity to participate in these events.

The prime concern at the Seattle Athletic Club is to provide a pleasant social and athletic atmosphere.

"We want to be able to combine the two," says Eileen Trezise, membership director. "Instead of going out for a drink, they can come down and play a game of racquetball."

Members can take advantage of 14 racquetball courts, an indoor five-lane swimming pool, an indoor three-lane jogging track which swings around the racquetball courts, a Nautilus center, spas and two squash courts.

The \$5.5 million complex, scheduled to open this month, is expecting a maximum membership of 3,000. The club's clientele will be made up mostly of professionals from the downtown Seattle area.

Backgammon tournaments and financial consultations from Merrill Lynch representatives will also be available to members.

Membership fees include an initiation of \$800 plus \$45 a month for an individual; or \$1,100 plus \$65 a month for a family.

HOLIDAY FITNESS AND RACQUET CLUB Greenbelt, Maryland

Billed as the "ultimate adult playground," the Holiday Fitness and Racquet Club in Greenbelt, Md. was designed with a flair for the future.

Neon lights adorn the coed gym and geometric patterns fill the multi-colored carpets.

The club also has become a "playground" for two local basketball pros—Jim Chones and Spencer Haywood of the Washington Bullets.

Thirty minutes from Baltimore, the 3,000-member club prides itself on being a total fitness center. "We are primarily interested in providing individuals with results rather than renting facilities," says Jim Stergiou, assistant manager.

The club offers members 11 racquetball courts, three gyms, swimming pool, indoor jogging track, whirlpool, saunas and a 1,200-square foot aerobic dancing facility.

Six instructors are on hand to help a clientele which includes many of the local students from the University of Maryland.

THE HAMILTON LAKES RACQUET CLUB Itasca, Illinois

In the Chicago area where there is a vast selection of athletic health clubs to pick from, the Hamilton Lakes Racquet and Sports Club in Itasca, Ill. has accumulated an impressive membership of almost 1,000 since its opening last June.

Members have their choice of nine racquetball courts, swimming pool, sauna, whirlpool, steam baths, a 13-piece Nautilus center, a 2.5-mile jogging path, two outside tennis courts and basketball courts. The jogging path winds around a 75-acre landscaped park.

The club is also connected to a 420-room luxury hotel, The Hamilton.

Spaulding Racquetball Clubs, Inc. manages the club. Membership fees include a \$250 initiation fee and \$30 a month. Family membership fees are \$40 a month plus a \$350 initiation fee.

The club's clientele includes corporate and family-oriented members.

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SERVICE BOX

TABLE SQUASH

Although there is nothing on the market dealing with the sport of racquetball, Table Squash Ltd. of Liverpool, England has come up with Table Squash.

The game, played on a 5 x 4-foot miniature squash court, comes with two table tennis paddles, five special balls and a rule book. The balls have a special rubber coating, which makes for less bounce than a regular table tennis ball.

Table Squash can be played competitively by two players or by one person for practice. "The game demands fast reactions and a good eye for the ball," said a spokesperson for the manufacturer.

And is a similar racquetball game in the works? "We hadn't thought about it but it is a possibility," said the spokesperson.

The cost for this is expensive—\$300—but the company says you can order the coin operated version instead of the standard model if you want to recoup your expenses.



PRINCESS CAT

The current Puma catalogue shows over 175 pictures of shoes manufactured by Puma—everything ranging from running to basketball, tennis, football, baseball, cycling and wrestling.

The shoe most geared for racquetball is the Princess Cat, made of nylon mesh and featuring a natural rubber sole. Features reinforced toe and heel areas. Suggested retail price is \$30.95.

WRIST COMPUTER

Although seemingly geared more for runners than racquetball players, if you want to check your pulse rate or recovery time after a rally, Biometric Systems, Inc. of Marina del Rey, Calif. has a product out they call the Genesis Exercise Computer.

The "computer" is worn on the wrist and can monitor pulse rate during exercise (a buzzer goes off if the player has exceeded his pulse rate limit), and can also check recovery time—how long it takes for the pulse to reach normal after exercise.

Other features are a quartz watch and an adjustable metronome which enables exercisers to pace their rhythm. Comes in sweat-proof case. Weighs two ounces. Suggested retail price: \$159.95.



OFF THE WALL



"If they're still 20 minutes apart
I can finish the tie breaker!"

THE NEXT SHOT

Our April issue offers a mixture of features, instruction and humor.

APRIL FOOLS SECTION

It's time for our irreverent look at the racquetball industry and those who play a key part in it.

FOR THE TEAM'S SAKE

Do Ektelon and Leach players really cheer on their teammates or is it every man for himself?

MELANIE CHARTOFF

Our Celebrity Gallery focuses on that attractive "newscaster" from *Fridays*.

ON COURT STRATEGY

Marty Hogan tells you how to react in certain situations.

BEATING THE ANXIETY GAME

Part two of our series on relaxation techniques.

PLUS:

Coverage of the men's pro stop from Hawaii and the WPRA tourney from Louisiana, another look back at an unusual day in racquetball and a cover story on a great pro player.

**Smash me.
Crush me.
Splat me.
Kill me.**



**I'll stay
forever
true blue.**

**No ball stays lively longer
than the new Wilson Tru Blue.**

We'll pay you to prove it to yourself. Take Wilson's Great American Playtest. There's a Playtest Questionnaire packed in every can of balls. Fill out the questionnaire and send it to Wilson. We'll send you a dollar. Ask your pro for details.

Wilson TRU BLUE



Marty Hogan
Signature Series

Turn yourself into a man of steel.

You're looking at the game's first steel racquet. The Marty Hogan Steel.

It was developed by DP Leach and True Temper from the strongest material ever used in a metal racquet — chromalloy, a material developed for America's space program.

Weaker racquets can bend and stay that way permanently. The Marty Hogan Steel resists this permanent warpage better than any other racquet, so it helps increase the power and accuracy of your game. But our Hogan Steel isn't just the strongest racquet on the market, it's also remarkably lightweight — only 250 grams, so you can

maintain consistent power throughout a match.

Our new racquet is also incredibly well balanced, because of a unique "step-down" frame feature modeled after True Temper's world famous golf shaft.

All in all, this is one super racquet. One that's good enough to wear the name of four-time Nationals champion, Marty Hogan.

So look for the Marty Hogan Steel at your favorite pro shop or retailer, add it to your arsenal, and we guarantee the balance of power will swing your way. Your Hogan Steel will make opponents

think your power shot is traveling faster than a speeding bullet.

DP LEACH
Fit for Life