

# RACQUETBALL

## ROCKY'S ROAD

*INTERVIEW WITH RECORD-SETTING 4X  
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# **U.S. NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS**

## **XLVIII**

**FEBRUARY 11 - 15, 2015**

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY – Tempe, Arizona



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#### Editorial Consultant

Linda Mojer / With Substance, Inc.  
info@withsubstance.com

#### Design

Matt Lupton • be.net/mattlupton  
luptondesign@gmail.com

#### On the Cover

Rocky Carson by Edson Hong. Photo shoot courtesy Renaissance Club Sport

#### USA RACQUETBALL STAFF

##### Steve Czarnecki

Executive Director  
sczarnecki@usra.org

##### Bob Bodor

Membership Manager  
bbodor@usra.org

##### Myles Hayes

Coordinator, Membership Services  
mhayes@usra.org

##### Barb Pyle

Accounting Assistant  
bpyle@usra.org

##### Joe Williams

National Volunteer  
jwilliams@usra.org

#### USA Racquetball Advisors

Doug Ganim – US OPEN Director  
Connie Martin – USAR-IP Programmer  
Otto Dietrich – Rules Commissioner

#### Submissions

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Contact: magazine@usra.org

All items are subject to editing.

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Team Minnesota: Back Row, L-R: Kyle Springer, Daniel Pekurovsky, Megan Beugen, Owen Forsythe, Raina Hartman, Nathan Soltis, Cole Hartman, Ellis Syke, Sam Bredenbeck; Front row: Tyler Beugen, Sage Hartman. Not pictured: Jordan Barth. Photo courtesy Leo Vasquez.



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## NATIONAL EVENTS & TEAM QUALIFYING

### U.S. National Doubles Championships

February 11-15, 2015  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, AZ

### U.S. National High School Championships

February 25 – March 1, 2015  
Missouri Athletic Club and Vetta Sports Concord  
St. Louis, MO

### U.S. National Intercollegiate Championships

March 25-28, 2015  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, AZ

### U.S. National Singles Championships

Site TBA

### U.S. National Junior Olympic Championships

June 24-28, 2015  
In-Shape Health Club – West Lane  
Stockton, CA

### UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Championships

October 7-11, 2015  
Life Time Fitness – Target Center  
Minneapolis, MN

### U.S. National Team Qualifiers & Process

USA Racquetball has released the 2015-16 U.S. National Team Qualification Process that will define the 2015 Pan Am Games delegation. The revised qualification process includes:

#### Singles Players (in order of qualification)

- #1 American on the IRT and LPRT Tours
- #2 American on the IRT and LPRT Tours
- National Singles U.S. Team Qualifier Champions
- #3 American on the IRT and LPRT Tours
- National Singles U.S. Team Qualifier Runners-Up
- Intercollegiate #1 Gold Singles Division Champions

#### Doubles Players (in order of qualification)

- National Doubles U.S. Team Qualifier Champions
- National Doubles U.S. Team Qualifier Runners-Up

All appointments to the 2015-16 U.S. National Team will run from June 1, 2015 through May 31, 2016.

Pro Tour qualifiers are based on rankings following the last event that concludes prior to June 1. Added details can be found on [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com).





FROM THE  
**Executive Director**

# Strategic Growth

*Please join me in welcoming new staff  
and signing on to new initiatives*

**O**ver the past five months USA Racquetball has been involved in a strategic planning process that has included a broad cross-section of our constituents. The message has been loud and clear – expand the reach of USA Racquetball!

As we continue to refine the strategy for achieving this and other related goals as part of this plan, we have already begun staff restructuring to support these developing strategies. Bob Bodor joined USA Racquetball in May and has been doing great work in his role of Membership Manager, including working with the Collegiate Council and others on advancing racquetball on college campuses. In November, Peggie Tellez will join the USA Racquetball staff in Colorado Springs as

Manager of Facility Relationships and Event Sanctioning. This role is integral in our plan to better support racquetball facilities and reach greater numbers of beginner and recreational racquetball players where they play. Of course, we'll also remain dedicated to

*Just as the national staff is growing to serve the needs of our current constituencies, a groundswell of "field support" through social media will go a long way to engage new players ... which is just what we need to fulfill our strategic goals!*

continually improving the services we provide to members who compete in USA Racquetball sanctioned events and national championships.

There's also a simple way that you can take part in expanding the reach of racquetball, by adding USA Racquetball to your daily "social media" routine. Visit USARacquetball.com often for the latest information about what's happening with the organization ... make sure that your online competitive record is up-to-date ... "like" the Facebook page to help build a wider audience ... tweet and follow to share how much you enjoy the sport ... post photos of yourself (and your opponents!) on and off the court, to show how much FUN the sport truly is! Just as the national staff is growing to serve the needs of our current constituencies, a groundswell of "field support" will go a long way to engage much-needed new players!

This type of change - which is so imperative for our success - will also be demonstrated at the 19th UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, where we'll see Pro Doubles for the first time! I don't know about you, but I can't wait to see the greatest players in the world competing in the fast-paced doubles game on the world's best show court. We'll see you in beautiful Minneapolis.

Here's to a great upcoming indoor season!

—Steve Czarnecki

**O**ur next generation of players is already preparing for the Junior World Championships to be held in Cali, Colombia in mid-October. Earlier in the summer, the U.S. Junior National Team completed a successful Camp at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs (see page 30). For the first time, USA Racquetball will be providing these developing athletes with travel assistance to the World Championships through the TEAM USA Challenge.

Want to double the value of your donation, at no added cost to you? Thanks to a generous group of matching benefactors, the USA Racquetball family has a wonderful opportunity to support this initiative for the Junior Team AND see those individual gifts doubled. Help match this challenge with a donation of \$100 or more at USARacquetball.com, today!

## TEAM USA CHALLENGE DONORS

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Robert & Susan Griffith	Shannon Wright
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## State Racquetball Associations

Iowa Racquetball Association	\$ 1,000
Texas Racquetball Association	\$ 1,000
Delaware Amateur Racquetball Association	\$ 200
New Mexico Racquetball Association	\$ 200
Kansas Racquetball Association	\$ 100
Memphis Area Racquetball Association	\$ 100
Nebraska State Racquetball Association	\$ 100

*List includes donors of \$100 or more through August 15.*



## FROM THE President

By Larry Haemmerle, President  
USA Racquetball Board of Directors

# Mile High JUNIORS

**T**he big news since my last column was the hosting of the Junior Olympic Championships in Colorado, where 154 participants marked an increase over last year's championships. My sincere appreciation and congratulations go to the local organizing committee and Matt Anderson, Facility Manager of the Highlands Ranch Recreation Center at Northridge, for their hard work and commitment to the success of the tournament.

We were very proud of this event as the consistent feedback we received was that this was one of the best Junior Olympic Championships in recent memory. Everyone stepped up to make this a first class National Championship event. In fact, many of the parents indicated it felt like a true National Championship, not just a Junior event.

It was very heartwarming to see the commitment many of the state associations offered to their junior contingents. A number of States provided financial support to the families of the players. Some states gave team shirts and even warmups to their players. Others underwrote entry fees and travel, offered lodging assistance, or provided paid Junior memberships, meals, and added financial assistance based upon individual

family needs. These are all examples of excellent use of State Association funds. Many states generate revenue by running tournament and fundraising events and through rebates provided by USA Racquetball.

The next challenge for our Junior players and their families are raising funds for the recently named Junior National Team to attend the Junior World Championships in Cali, Colombia. As always, the costs associated with making these young players' dreams a reality can be considerable and sometimes prohibitive. You can find a variety of ways to help support these young athletes financially on our website, via local efforts to generate resources, and by using social media to spread the word.

My wife and I feel privileged to spend time watching these dedicated athletes train at their annual training camp in Colorado Springs. We always donate time and money to our Juniors and encourage all of you to do so as well. This is an excellent use of state association rebate money as it supports the growth and development of our Junior players and programs throughout the nation.

Good luck to our Junior National Team! We are all very proud of you and wish you the best in Colombia. Go Team USA!

## Peggie Tellez to join USA Racquetball Staff



**U**SA Racquetball is pleased to announce that Peggie Tellez will join the USA Racquetball staff as Manager of Facility Relationships and Event Sanctioning, effective November 3.

Peggie brings more than 12 years of experience in Financial Services sales and customer relationship management. A 30-year player of racquetball, she is also deeply involved in the sport, having served as a USA Racquetball Board Member and Officer, President of the California Nevada Racquetball Association and Co-Founder and Board Member of the Military Racquetball Federation. Competitively, she has won two U.S. National Singles Championships age division titles.

The Manager of Facility Relationships and Event Sanctioning is a key leadership position that will be integral for USA Racquetball

in reaching its objective of serving a greater number of racquetball players and assisting in their development as core participants. In this role, Peggie's primary responsibilities will revolve around improving and building relationships with racquetball facilities, managing the sanctioning of events and working with state racquetball associations to grow the sport.

"I can't wait to get started in this important role for USA Racquetball and expand the reach of our sport," commented Peggie. "I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to work in this capacity on behalf of the sport I love."

Peggie and her husband George will be relocating to Colorado where she will work out of USA Racquetball's National Headquarters in Colorado Springs.





# ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE CAN RAISE MORE THAN **\$25,000** FOR THE TEAMS!

**S**upport the U.S. Adult and Junior National Teams with a tax-deductible contribution today. Your support is vital to the players and coaches as they prepare to represent the United States in international competition. Funds are primarily used for travel expenses, entry fees, and training.

Donations of \$100 or more ... made in 2014 to the TEAM USA CHALLENGE ... *will be doubled* by the group of generous Team Benefactors at right, who have each pledged up to \$2,500 to support the cause. With your support, the USA Racquetball family can raise more than \$30,000 for your US National Teams!

## INAUGURAL TEAM USA CHALLENGE BENEFACTORS

*Rick Betts • Steve & Rosanna Czarnecki • Cheryl Kirk & Kit Lawson  
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*For the first time under the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, donations will be used to support direct travel costs of U.S. Junior National Team members attending the Junior World Championships!*

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# 47th National Singles

## RETURNS TO CALIFORNIA

■ By Bob Bodor | Photos by Roby Partovich

The Meridian Club in Fullerton, California, once again played host to the USA Racquetball National Singles Championships, presented by Penn and Ektelon, drawing 300 of the nation's best for spirited competition, an exciting National Team Qualifier, and camaraderie that always makes this an outstanding event. Thanks go to our host for continuing to make everyone feel at home, as well as to the California local organizing committee for their excellent advance work and support throughout the week.

In the marquee qualifying divisions, Jake Bredenbeck won his first US Team Qualifying Championship, while Rhonda Rajsich added another win to her long list of career titles. On the men's side, #5 seed Jake Bredenbeck defeating #2 David Horn in the finals, 15-14 and 15-12, and both earned a spot on the National Team. To reach the finals, Bredenbeck survived a thrilling 11-9 tiebreaker in his semi-final upset over top-seeded Marco Rojas.

Among the top women, a small but talented field kicked off with 17-year-old Lexi York logging a straight game defeat over Laura Brandt, 15-5, 15-9. From the #2 seed position, Janel Tisinger defeated #3 seeded Cheryl Gudinas in a close semi-final of 15-12 and 15-13, while Rajsich sped past York to set up the much-anticipated final. Even though the opening game went back and forth, Rajsich proved too much for Tisinger and quickly took the match 15-10 and 15-4.

With so many national-caliber, elite players "in the house," there were plenty of great stories (like Iowa's Josh Paul, winner of the 2014 John LoMonaco Grant, taking the combined 25/30 B division and losing only a single game in the process) ... but since our space is limited, here are just a few highlights of the week ...

In the Men's Open, #3 seed Adam Manilla defeated top seed Danny Lavelly in another highly entertaining match which, unfortunately, ended in injury when Lavelly was unable to continue at 2-1 in their tiebreaker. Men's Elite champ Jeremy White defeated Brent Huff 15-5, 15-5, in one of the most competitive divisions of the tournament. Five matches in the round were decided by tiebreaker, with runner up and #8 seed Brent Huff winning both his quarter- and semi-final matches in three. From the #2 spot, White also faced a tiebreaker in his semi-final, en route to the Elite crown.

New Hall of Famer Jimmy Lowe dominated the Men's 45+ and 50+ Open divisions against the same familiar foe in both exciting finals. Squaring off against Richard Eisemann each time, Lowe cruised to the 45+ Championship, 15-3 and 15-6, before allowing slightly closer games in the 50+ final, 15-6 and 15-11. On his way to double gold, Lowe never surrendered more than seven points in the 45+ draw and thrilled crowds with his energetic performance. In the 50s, Eisemann played very well and cruised through his side of the draw but could not overcome Lowe's stellar play.

Active duty and veteran players battled it out in the Men's Heroes Open division, where Troy Vanbemmelen of Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska defeated Paul Julbes in that final, winning a hard-fought 15-14, 11-15, 11-5 match that truly could have gone



Women's finalists Janel Tisinger and Rhonda Rajsich



Men's finalists Jake Bredenbeck and David Horn

either way. In the Men's Heroes 50+, Rabbit Rogers cruised into the division final where he defeated top seed Daniel Kreuzer in a very close and competitive straight game final, 15-12, 15-13.

Coming in as the #4 Seed, Lexi York dominated the Women's Elite Division without dropping a game, defeating top seeded Elizabeth Simmons 15-8 and 15-4. York was certainly one of the players who made a big name for herself throughout the tournament. In the Women's A, Cindy Burman, the #4 seed defeated top seed CJ Herceg 15-9, 15-14 to claim her national title in another highly competitive draw.

In age division play, #2 seed Peggine Tellez and top seed Karen Schmidt squared off in the combined Women's 50/55/65 division, where Tellez pulled away to win it 15-12 and 15-3. In Women's 55/60+, perennial champ and top seeded Debra Tisinger-Moore continued her domination with a convincing victory in the combined division, surrendering a paltry 34 points throughout the round robin.

The event also offered specialty doubles divisions, like Mens/Women's Open, featuring great, highly-competitive play that saw #3 Seed Adam Manilla and Jonathan Clay defeat challengers Aimee Ruiz and Janel Tisinger, 15-8, 15-9; Men's Centurion, where Mike Lippitt and Rocky Carson cruised to a victory over Mike Alderson and Ramon Valerio 15-8 and 15-9; and Mixed Open, with Aimee Ruiz and John Ellis dominating the draw and cruising to victory, defeating Janel Tisinger and Bryan Crosser 15-13 and 15-10 for that title.

In all, it was a jam-packed "old home" week of great competition, recognition and fun for the entire racquetball community. Don't miss it next year!





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## MEN'S SINGLES

DIVISION NAME	WINNER	RUNNER-UP
US Team Qualifying	Jake Bredenbeck	David Horn
Open	Adam Manilla	Danny Lavelly
Elite	Jeremy White	Brent Huff
A	Ryan Moreno	Rocco Vega
B	Nick Richardson	Ruben Puebla
C	Jack Kulju	Kevin Deyo
D	Zaighum Yazdan	Adam Billows
24-	Ryan Moreno	Jose Hernandez
25+	Bryan Crosser	
30+	Thomas Fuhrmann	Brent Walters
35+	Eric Harper	Raymond Maestas
40+	Arturo Barruel	Keith Minor
45+	Jimmy Lowe	Richard Eisemann
50+	Jimmy Lowe	Richard Eisemann
55+	Wes Snead	Glenn Bell
60+	Dave Azuma	Mark Baron
65+	Russell Mannino	Karl Meisenheimer
70+	Mickey Bellah	Brad Parra
75+	William Baker	Steve Covey

## Age + Skill

24-A	Ryan Moreno	Jose Hernandez
24-C	Jeremy Robben	
25+A	Sam Hojat	Robert Johnson
25+B	Skylar Stewart	
25+C	Adam Billows	Aby Thottiyil
30+A	Trevor Jones	Hubaldo Hernandez
30+B	Josh Paul	Jon Rafkind
35+A	Ryan Rowlands	Bryan Shaw
35+B	Brian Laney	Julio Carrillo
35+C	Michael Hall	Brian Acuna
40+A	Yury Furman	Jesus Quevedo
40+B	Darin Peterson	John Provan
40+C	Jeffery Thompson	
45+A	Steve Belmonte	Amit Athalye
45+B	Brian Ancheta	John Provan
45+C	Michael Aguas	Kevin Deyo
50+A	Kevin Barlia	Scott Case
50+B	Max Lopez	Roby Partovich
50+C	Steve Bonfiglio	Phillip Eliana Jr.
55+A	Jimmy Johanson	Larry Matula
55+B	Ray Redelman	Bruce Greenberg
55+C	Alan Fradkin	
60+A	Gary Buckmaster	Pat McCormack
60+B	Roy San Miguel	Pat McGrath
60+C	Robert Chavez	Gary Wollery
65+A	Michael Stephens	Pete Harvey
65+B	Counte Cooley	Bruce Cole
65+C	Jack Morgenroth	Claude Moore
70+A	Charles Dryer	Dave Shelburne
70+B	Charles Dryer	Richard Gower
70+C	Mario Najera	Pablo Reyes
Heroes 50+	Rabbit Rogers	Daniel Kreuzer
Heroes Open	Troy Vanbemmelen	Paul Julbes
Boy's 18-	Dane Elkins	Jack Kulju
Boy's 14-	Dane Elkins	Mitchell Turner

## WOMEN'S SINGLES

DIVISION NAME	WINNER	RUNNER-UP
US Team Qualifying	Rhonda Rajsich	Janel Tisinger
Elite	Lexi York	Elizabeth Simmons
A	Cindy Burman	CJ Herceg
B	Nancy Davis	Betty Mota
C	Regan White	Heejim Koo
D	Donarae Dunmoody	Heather Mahoney
Girl's 18-	Heejin Koo	
24-	Lexi York	Jazim Trevino
24-C	Atossa Rejaei	
25+A	Heather Hojat	
35+B	Dragana Bulatovic	
40+	Tracy Shearer	
40+A	CJ Herceg	Nancy Davis
40+C	Regan White	
45+	Karin Ide	
50+	Jody Nance	Cindy Tilbury
50+A	Peggine Tellez	Karen Schmidt
50+C	Donarae Dunmoody	
55+	Debra Tisinger-Moore	Linda Moore
55+A	Karen Schmidt	Vicky Birkmann
60+	Marsha Berry	Terry Ann Rogers
65+	Mildred Gwinn	
65+A	Marquita Molina	
70+	Mildred Gwinn	Marquita Molina

## DOUBLES

DIVISION NAME	WINNER	RUNNER-UP
Open Doubles	Adam Manilla / Jonathan Clay	Aimee Ruiz / Janel Tisinger
Men's A/B Doubles	Robert Johnson III / Trevor Jones	David Horton / Robert Chavez
Men's C Doubles	Joe Massa / Kevin Deyo	George Andraos / Tommy Andraos
Centurion+ Open	Mike Lippitt / Rocky Carson III	Mike Alderson / Ramon Valerio
Centurion+A	Alan Weiner / David Nash	Mike Alderson / Dennis Riggs
Centurion+B	Daniel Mullin / Mark Candy	David Aguirre / Roy San Miguel
Mixed Open	Aimee Ruiz / John Ellis	Janel Tisinger / Bryan Crosser
Heroes Doubles	Dean Lavilla / Rabbit Rogers	Chong Boley / Robert Varkonyi

## LATE BREAKING NEWS

## BREDENBECK LEADS YOUNG TEAM USA IN MEXICO

In August, a young US delegation competed against many of the world's best players at the PASO Pan American Sports Festival in Guadalajara, Mexico, with promising results.

In his first international appearance for the National Team, **Jake Bredenbeck**, 22, led the way with a silver medal in doubles and bronze in singles. According to Head Coach **Dave Ellis**, "Jake Bredenbeck is for real. He is big, strong, and quick, with some amazing reflexes. His hands are magic. Jake is a true talent and you will see him climbing to the top of the pro tour."

Partnering with Jake in doubles was 21-year old **Jose Diaz** and **David "Bobby" Horn**, 24, also earned a singles bronze. Overall, the men won the silver medal and secured a full complement of two singles players and one doubles team for the 2015 Pan Am Games to be held in Toronto, Canada.

On the women's side, team veteran **Rhonda Rajsich**, 35, along with 20-year old **Devon Pimentelli**, took silver in doubles. Rhonda also made it to the quarterfinals in singles and **Da'monique Davis**, 29, who has been rising up the pro ranks, reached the round of 16. Overall, the women's team won the bronze medal. Congratulations to the Team on a great performance!





# JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Bob Bodor | Photo by Leo Vasquez

The Highlands Ranch Recreation Center outside Denver was the host of the 41st Wilson National Junior Olympic Championships in late June, where players, families and coaches were treated to a first class facility and hospitality all week long. With 27 states represented, entries reached their highest level in the past four years – and the stakes were high for capturing a spot on the U.S. Junior National Team roster.

Thanks to a great local organizing committee, the Colorado Racquetball Association offered outstanding leadership and lined up dozens of volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure that everyone enjoyed themselves. Many generous sponsors also supported the Championships and the Highlands Ranch Recreation Center and its top-notch staff deserve special recognition for a job well done.

Top-seeded Krish Thakur won the Boys 10- singles over #9 seed Timmy Hansen, 15-14, 15-5, followed by a 2013 rematch in 12- between #1 Akul Ramayani, who defended his title against #2 Antonio Rojas, 15-13, 15-4. Ramayani also made it to the Boys 14 Finals as a #7 seed, losing to Jordan Barth, 15-4 and 15-10. Later in the day, Barth partnered with Justus Benson to win the 16- Doubles over Jake Birnel and Mauro Rojas 15-10, 15-8, and Rojas later captured the Boys 16- title with a defeat over Wayne Antone, 15-6, 15-9.

The Boys 18- marked another 2013 rematch between Colorado's own Adam Manilla, who dug out from a deep first-game hole to defeat Connor Laffey 15-14, 15-4 and claim another crown.

In more doubles action, Californians Dane Elkins and Ricardo Diaz teamed up to defeat David Marsden and Sam Myers in Boys 14-. Top seeds Manilla and Sawyer Lloyd reclaimed a second consecutive 18- doubles title with a win over Laffey and Antone, 15-1 and 15-10.

Action on the girl's side led off with the remarkable Heather Mahoney, who allowed only 35 total points in her 10 match victories, all earned in a sweep of the 10- divisions, including a repeat win in Girls doubles with Julia Stein and a Mixed 10-win with Vedant Chauhan.

A string of rematches featured Girls 12- champ Nikita Chauhan, who defended her title over Hannah Carver in straight games of 15-11, 15-0, as did Kaitlyn Boyle over local Briana Jacquet in their own highly entertaining Girls 14- rematch, 15-10, 15-10. In a thrilling Girls 16- rematch final, #1 seed Jordan Cooperrider defeated #2 Erika Manilla, then the two re-focused to win the Girls 16- doubles over Karina Quintanilla and Daniela Torres, 15-14, 15-5. The Girls 18- crown went to Hollie Scott who outlasted Holly Hungerford with an 11-9 tiebreaker win. Lastly, the Girls 18- doubles final went to Hungerford and Danielle Falvey, 15-4, 15-5.

After all this effort, many of the champions – now named to the US Junior National Team - returned to Colorado to spend a challenging and productive week at the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center to work with interim Head Coach Cheryl Gudinas and her outstanding staff. Plenty of court time, team building exercises, strategy sessions and an early morning run up the famous Manitou Incline highlighted the week. The team will re-convene the third week of October to travel to Cali, Colombia for the Junior World Championships.

For the many who have made generous donations that help support all of our National Teams at events like the Junior World Championships in Colombia, THANK YOU! If you haven't yet signed on to the TEAM USA Challenge please visit [usaracquetball.com](http://usaracquetball.com) to make your gift and remember, any amount goes a long way in helping our athletes do their best while representing our country.

## BOYS GOLD

SINGLES	Champion	Runner-up
	18- Adam Manilla	Connor Laffey
	16- Mauro Rojas	Wayne Antone IV
	14- Jordan Barth	Akul Ramayani
	12- Akul Ramayani	Antonio Rojas
	10- Krish Thakur	Timmy Hansen
	10-mb Gstlin Sutherland	Hudson Farmer
	8- Ben Horner	Nikhil Prasad
	8-mb Ben Horner	Joe Merz
	6-mb Joe Mercz	Ace Akins

## GIRLS GOLD

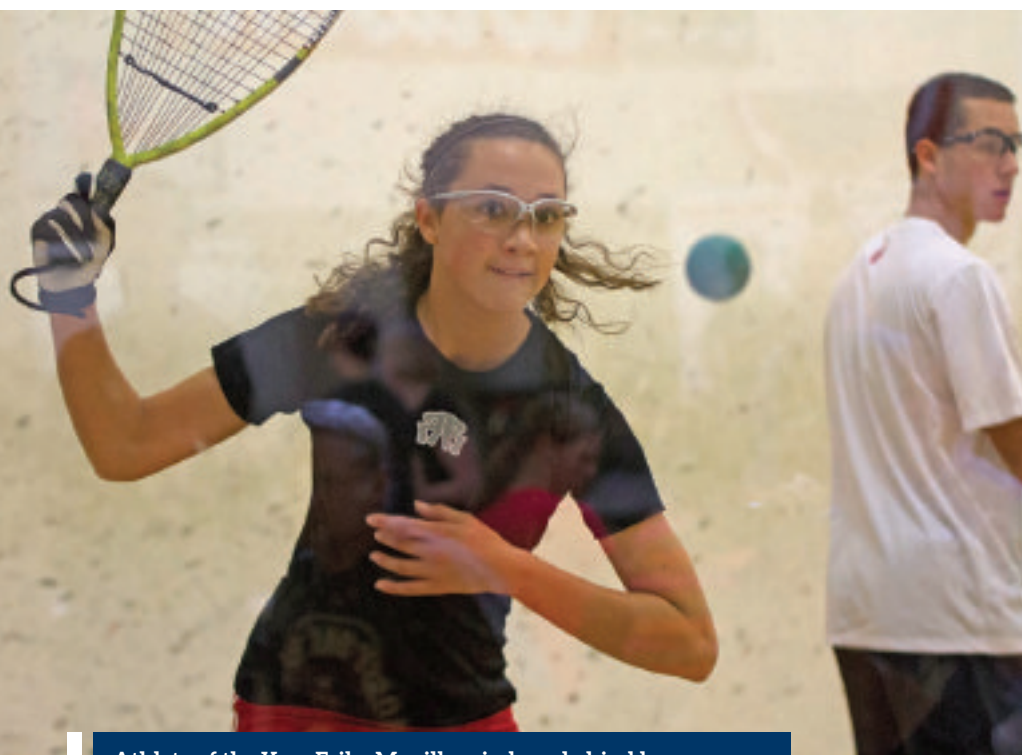
Champion	Runner-up
Hollie Scott	Hollee Hungerford
Jordan Cooperrider	Erika Manilla
Kaitlyn Boyle	Briana Jacquet
Nikita Chauhan	Hannah Carver
Heather Mahoney	Julia Stein
Elena Mathew	Shaylynn Stephen
Kareena Mathew	Yurae McCallister
Kareena Mathew	Ashlyn Carver
Ashlyn Carver	Jordan Ellis

Champion	Runner-up
18- Adam Manilla/Sawyer Lloyd	Connor Laffey/Wayne Antone IV
16- Jordan Barth/Justus Benson	Jake Birnel/Mauro Rojas
14- Dane Elkins/Ricardo Diaz	David Marsden/Sam Myers
12- Antonio Rojas/Nick Birnel	James D'Ambrogia/Tommy Andraos
10- Josh Shea/Timmy Hansen	Nikhil Prasad/Vedant Chauhan

Champion	Runner-up
Danielle Falvey/Hollee Hungerford	Karina Quintanilla/Daniela Torres
Erika Manilla/Jordan Cooperrider	Lily Caldwell/Madison Myers
Briana Jacquet/Kaitlyn Boyle	
Rei McCormick/Graciana Wargo	
Heather Mahoney/Julia Stein	Elena Mathew/Kareena Mathew

## MIXED

Champion	Runner-up
18- Adam Manilla/Erika Manilla	Hollee Hungerford/Josh Lebow
16- Hollie Scott/Jake Birnel	Brady Yelverton/Daniela Torres
14- Atossa Rejaei/Dane Elkins	Ben Jenkel/Briana Jacquet
12- Megan Carver/Nick Birnel	James D'ambrogia/Nikita Chauhan
10- Heather Mahoney/Vedant Chauhan	Kaptain McCallister/Lily Caldwell



Athlete of the Year Erika Manilla winds up behind her brother Adam in their mixed doubles match. Erika and Adam are also Colorado's current State Open singles Champions. Photo: Jared Verner.

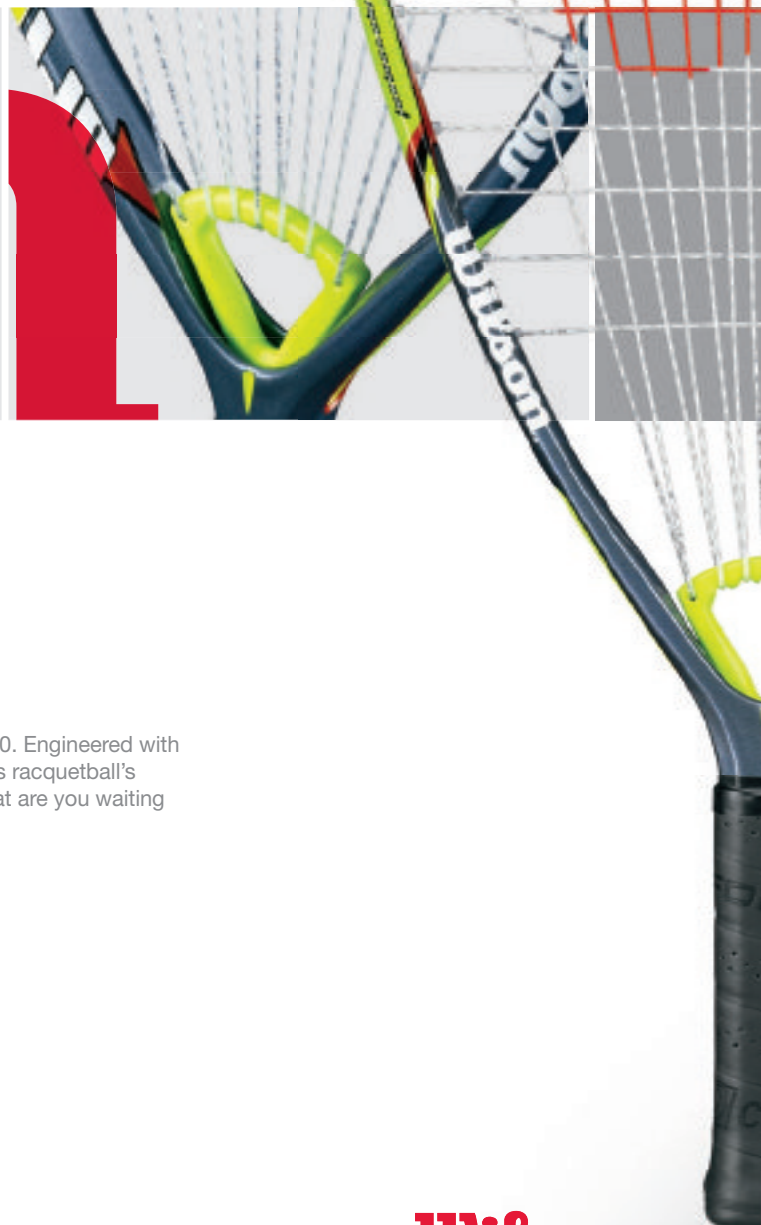


Athlete of the Year Connor Laffey





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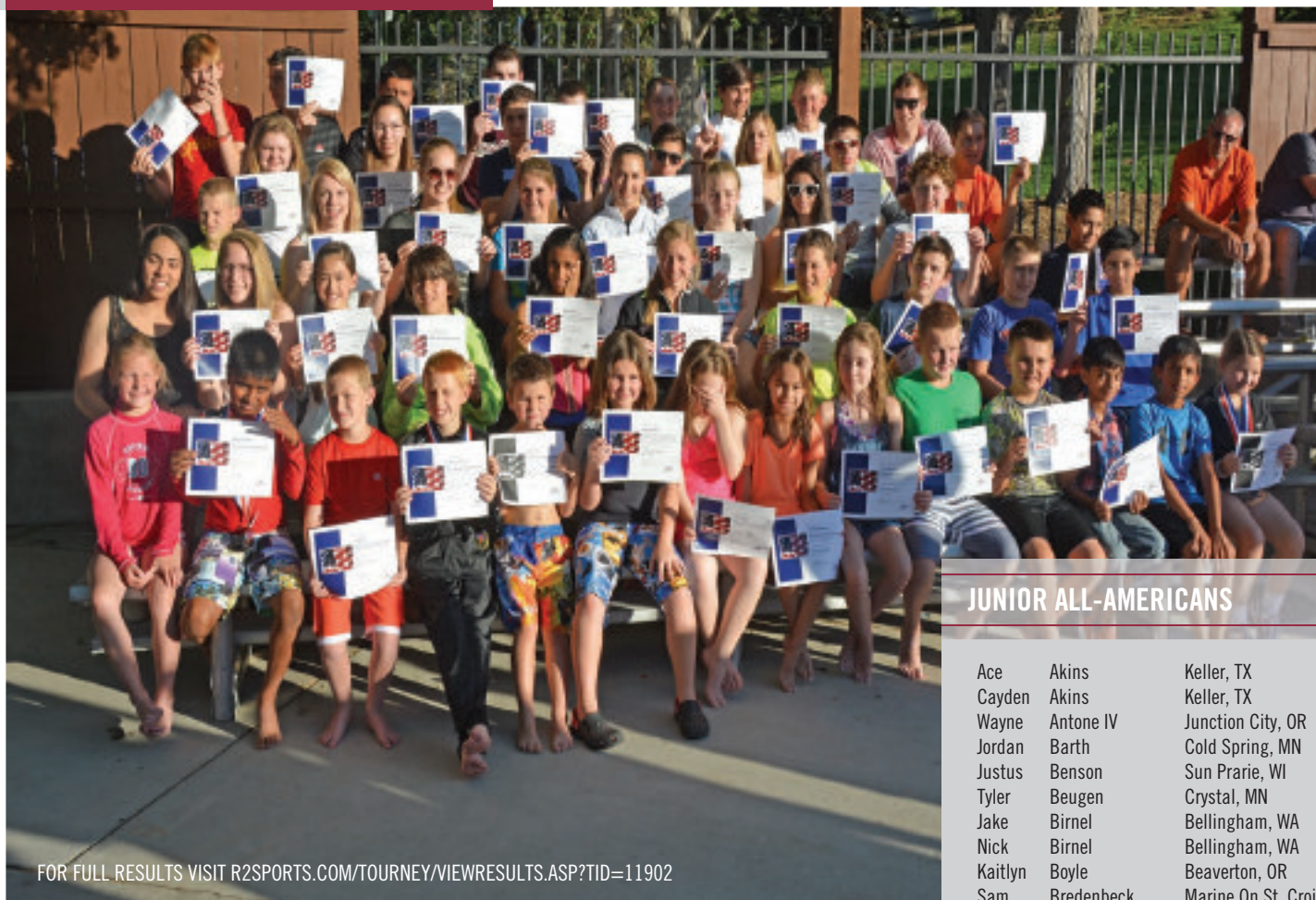


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## JUNIOR ALL-AMERICANS

Ace	Akins	Keller, TX
Cayden	Akins	Keller, TX
Wayne	Antone IV	Junction City, OR
Jordan	Barth	Cold Spring, MN
Justus	Benson	Sun Prairie, WI
Tyler	Beugen	Crystal, MN
Jake	Birnel	Bellingham, WA
Nick	Birnel	Bellingham, WA
Kaitlyn	Boyle	Beaverton, OR
Sam	Bredenbeck	Marine On St. Croix, MN
Ashlyn	Carver	Spokane, WA
Hannah	Carver	Spokane, WA
Nikita	Chauhan	San Ramon, CA
Jordan	Cooperrider	Palm Harbor, FL
Ricardo	Diaz	Stockton, CA
Dane	Elkins	Los Angeles, CA
Danielle	Falvey	Sussex, WI
Evan	Gear	Grand Junction, CO
Andrew	Gleason	Urbandale, IA
Timmy	Hansen	Wellington, FL
Raina	Hartman	Hamel, MN
Kristine	Holman	Salem, OR
Benjamin	Horner	Ankeny, IA
Hollie	Hungerford	Milwaukee, OR
Briana	Jacquet	Golden, CO
Connor	Laffey	Salem, OR
Joshua	Lebow	Salem, OR
Sawyer	Lloyd	Petaluma, CA
Heather	Mahoney	Penn Grove, CA
Adam	Manilla	Centennial, CO
Erika	Manilla	Centennial, CO
Elena	Mathew	Corvallis, OR
Kareena	Mathew	Corvallis, OR
Yurac	McCallister	Grand Junction, CO
Rei	McCormick	Urbandale, IA
Joe	Merz	Davison, MI
Nikhil	Prasad	Fremont, CA
Akul	Ramayani	Poughkeepsie, NY
Anotnio	Rojas	Stockton, CA
Mauro	Rojas	Stockton, CA
Hollie	Scott	Lynden, WA
Josh	Shea	Cortland Manor, NY
Emily	Stanton	Littleton, CO
Julia	Stein	Murphyville, PA
Shaylynn	Stephen	Ft. Worth, TX
Gatlin	Sutherland	Great Falls, MT
Krish	Thakur	Tracy, CA
Graciana	Wargo	Clearwater, FL
Ellie	Weiler	Highlands Ranch, CO

## ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

Girl	Boy	Sportsmanship	Esprit Boy	Esprit Girl
<b>Erika Manilla</b>	<b>Connor Laffey</b>	<b>Robert Hemphill</b>	<b>Julian Singh</b>	<b>Kaitlyn Boyle</b>

## 2014 JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Top 10 States	(Points)	Top 10 States	(Points)
California	694.5	Minnesota	223.5
Oregon	422.0	Florida	174.0
Colorado	291.5	New York	143.0
Texas	288.0	Iowa	129.0
Washington	253.0	Wisconsin	72.0

## 2015 JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

June 24-28, 2015 • Stockton, California

**Host Club:** In-Shape Sport at West Lane

**Local Attractions:** Delta Waterways, Stockton Ports minor league baseball, Great shopping, Central Valley Food and Wine, City of Lodi. Within 2 hours of Yosemite National Park, Lake Tahoe Region, Sacramento and San Francisco.

**Travel:** In addition to Stockton Airport there are 4 major airports within 80 Miles of Stockton. Amtrak services all major West Coast cities

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND





## APPENDECTOMY? NO PROBLEM.

Story & all action photos by Jared Verner

On June 5, Heather Mahoney came home and told her mom that her stomach wasn't feeling very well. Her mom suggested yogurt to calm her stomach down, but that caused a sudden sharp pain and she ran to her room, clutching her middle.

Within a few hours, she was recovering in a hospital bed in Santa Rosa, Calif., from an appendectomy.

Three weeks later, Heather brought home triple gold from the 2014 Wilson Junior Olympic Championships, with wins in Girls 10 and Under Singles, Doubles, and Mixed 10 and under Doubles.

"When I was waiting for the surgery, my dad and sister came to visit me," Heather said. "The first thing I asked was 'Daddy, will I be able to go to Denver?'"

Heather surprised herself at how well she did, considering she couldn't laugh, sneeze or cough without crying only weeks before the tournament. The surgery meant she missed her last day of school on June 6, and she was told to take it easy during the first week after the surgery.

"I was really, really nervous," Heather said. "I've never had surgery, and I had no idea what it would feel like."

"One thing I noticed when I got to the hospital right before pre-op was how good her spirits were," said her father, John. "It appeared she wasn't nervous at all. She was full of smiles. We assured her that everything was going to be fine."

After 40 minutes in surgery, Heather was on the way to her hospital room for the night. Her mother, Melodese, spent the night with her.

Heather had two-and-a-half weeks between her discharge from the hospital to the family's departure for her third Junior Olympics appearance. While resting, she watched racquetball on TV. When she got back to the court, she wasn't able to do drills that required her to reach over her head.

At the tournament, she mentioned being a little sore sometimes when playing, but that didn't limit her ability to move through the brackets. What a remarkable recovery for a very determined young lady. Congratulations!

### WOMEN'S SENIOR/MASTERS RACQUETBALL



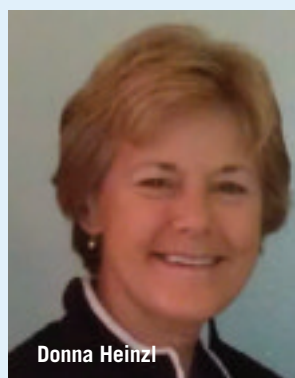
## 25 Years, 2,000 players, 10,000 matches

by Kendra Tutsch

A lot of racquetball has been played in the Women's Senior/Masters Racquetball National Championships, but the real story is the players, because it's the friendships, as much as the competition, that keeps everyone coming back.

**Terry Rogers** clearly remembers her first: "In 1996, Meri Jean Kelley asked if we might like to host the WSMRA at our club in San Francisco. I said 'Sure why not, over 100 women playing a tournament, what could be better than that?'" It was the first one held in California, and it was a great success. Terry recalls, "It was so much fun that I haven't missed one since and plan to continue for as long as I can." Terry had so much fun that she joined the WSMRA Board and is now our tournament chair.

Players across the country, like **Linda Moore** from Nebraska, share a fondness for the tournament: "I can give you a few reasons why I don't want to miss it. I attend almost every year because I love to get together with the good friends I've met through racquetball. I know that most of them won't miss it either, so I also know that there will be good competition and,



Donna Heinzl

no doubt, fun times!" These sentiments are echoed by most.

**Donna Heinzl** is among a dedicated group of Illinois players that is famous for their special shirts, having a good time wherever they are, and for dancing at the banquet! Nancy Kronenfeld has been on the WSMRA Board since its inception, and some Illinois players have been to over 20 of the tournaments!

Donna explains why she likes it so much: "I believe my first year going was 2000, to Baltimore, and it didn't take much to talk me into a girl's trip to play my favorite game!" Even more appealing was the round-robin format with back-to-back matches. "I never played many tournaments because I hated waiting hours between matches," so Donna was hooked!

Donna even attended the 25th in California even though she could not play. "I went to support my travel buddies and to see the friends I've made from previous years. I still had a wonderful time and I'm hopeful that I'll be able to play in the doubles division next year just so that I can continue to be a part of this wonderful organization."

continued on page 24 >>



# NEW SEASON PREVIEW

## NEW TALENT TO TEST LONGORIA?

Story & Photos by TJ Baumbaugh

What can LPRT fans expect for the 2014-2015 season? The short answer is continued growth in the Ladies' Tour with more events, more trips south of the border, more Grand Slams, and more appearances of Pro Doubles. The long answer begs the bigger question, asked by more fans than any other: *will Paola Longoria be able to continue her astonishing record and finish yet another season undefeated?* Fans will watch closely to see if one of the new shining up-and-comers will perfect her game enough to over-come the racquetball star, or if one of the veteran players will crack Paola's code. If that time comes, who will it be?

Speaking of up-and-comers, we have another class of scholarship winners who will be working their way toward the top. Thanks to a successful first run and our generous supporters, the LPRT Scholarship Program is back for its second season. We are excited to announce the winners as well as a new opportunity for our sponsors.

The LPRT has partnered with a 501(c)3 foundation created by Mike Lippitt to help support our young racquetball athletes in their quests to compete at the highest level. ReachingYourDreamFoundation.com offers sponsors a tax-deductible method of donating to the LPRT Scholarship Program. People wishing to support the program can donate online directly, or obtain postal information from the website in order to mail checks to the California Foundation offices.



A group of local organizers, fans and supporters joins tour athletes on the court in Herndon. Photo: TJ Baumbaugh

### AND THE 2014-2015 LPRT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ARE:

- **Sofia Rascon**, Playas de Rosarito, Baja California, Mexico
- **Hailey Miller**, Ramona, CA, USA
- **Sheryl Lotts**, Columbus, OH, USA
- **Maria Renée Rodriguez**, Santa Catarina Pinula, Guatemala
- **Alexandra Herrera**, San Nicolas de los Garza, Nuevo Leon, Mexico
- **Lucia Gonzalez**, Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico

The new and veteran talent is outstanding and we're sure the ladies will put on an amazing show again this season. Catch the action live on the LPRT Network (lprrt.net). The LPRT is also excited to announce that Jonathan Clay, President of Rollout Lifestyle Apparel brand, will be taking on the position of Director of Marketing! Jonathan will bring marketing and social media expertise to the LPRT and will help to expand the Tour's presence via the LPRT website and Facebook page, as well as other social platforms. Rollout Lifestyle Apparel is racquetball's leading apparel brand. Through this partnership, the LPRT looks forward to bringing the tour and its players to fans in ways that have never been done before.



## 2015 SCHEDULE

DATE	TOURNAMENT	LOCATION	LEVEL
Oct. 8-12	US OPEN	Minneapolis, MN	Grand Slam
Oct 17-19	Ektelon Stockton Pro Am	Stockton, CA	Tier 1
Dec. 5-7	Paola Longoria Invitational	Monterrey, Mexico	Grand Slam
Dec. 12-14	Christmas Classic	Arlington, VA	Tier 1
Jan. 23-25	Wilson Tour for Hope	Cincinnati, OH	Tier 1
Feb. 20-22	Winter Classic	Overland Park, KS	Tier 1
March 6-8	New Jersey Open	Warren, NJ	Tier 1
March TBD	California Regionals	Reseda, CA	Tier 1
April TBD	Battle at the Alamo	San Antonio, TX	Tier 1
April 17-19	Mile High Pro/Am	Denver, CO	Tier 1
May TBD	Ektelon LPRT Pro Nationals	TBD, VA	Tier 1



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**Paola Longoria**

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**Rocky Carson**

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# TEXAS POLICE GAMES

Story & Photos by Bill Bearden

The annual Texas Police Games have once again come and gone, with a great display of camaraderie among friends and another entertaining social event at Las Brisas Mexican Restaurant.

In a rematch of the Men's Open singles finals pitting the power of Jayson Jordan against the cunning of Rick Parker, the tiebreaker went to Parker for the Gold and this year's "Top Cop of the Year" honors. Jordan then returned to the courts the following day and took Gold in Mixed Open Doubles with partner Angela Chambers.

Recently retired 2013 Texas Police Athletic Federation Hall of Fame inductee, Phyllis Clair, took home another Gold in Women's Open Singles. Clair dedicated over 33 years to the Travis County Sheriff's office, holding the rank of Major the last five years. NPRA Board member Mike Welch took out all his challengers to win the Men's A/B Division; Rich Kessler and partner Frank Cherry swept the board in taking Gold in the 50+ Men's Doubles.

But the real story was the play and perseverance of Angela Chambers. Not only did she compete and take home Gold in the 5k and 10k runs in the mornings prior to playing racquetball, she sustained a broken right hand in a mixed doubles match. Her right hand was so swollen that she could barely



NPRA Board members Bill Bearden & Mike Welch just prior to their 40+ singles match

hold her racquet but, even after taking an injury timeout, she refused to sit out by stating, "I'm not a quitter, I'll finish my matches." She works for the Department of Public Safety and is one tough "Trooper," who is also the least-experienced player to participate in our event. We welcome her to our racquetball family, with congratulations on triple Gold/Silver medal wins at the 2014 Police Games.

Next, NPRA players Bearden and Jordan traveled to York, PA, to participate in the biennial 2014 Can-Am Police & Fire Games in July, where Jordan was successful in his attempt to capture the Open crown. Bearden won the Men's A, and the pair earned a "3-peat" as Open Doubles Champs as they did at the 2010 and 2012 Games. Congratulations to Team NPRA!



By Peter Berger

What a year of change for the World Firefighters Racquetball Association. On the court, the addition of newly sponsored players allows the WFRA to spread its wings across the U.S. to drum up interest. In addition to Ektelon and Gearbox players, we hope to have players from Head, E-Force, and Pro-Kennex join our lineup. With help from the USRA and the pro tours, we're looking to find firefighters that want to improve their fitness by not only playing racquetball, but by gaining lifelong and competitive friendships on the court.

We encourage any firefighter who plays tournaments to keep up on what it would take to get sponsored in the 2014-15 season and to help recruit firefighters, paramedics, and EMT's by directing them to look us up online at [worldfireracquetball.com](http://worldfireracquetball.com).

The WFRA was the lead sponsor for the First Responder Games held in Palm Beach County, Florida in mid-August, where all First Responders - from Fire, EMS, Police, Military and Corrections - were invited to compete. With the help of the Florida Racquetball Association, the games awarded Gold

# FIRST RESPONDER GAMES



medals to Adalberto Rivera, Jr (Men's 30/40 A/B), Peter S. Berger (40/50C), Gene Fry (A/B, 50/60 A/B & A/B Doubles), Mike Bingham (C) and Dave Cuevas (A/B Doubles). For full results, visit [www.firstrespondergames.com](http://www.firstrespondergames.com).

The WFRA will head to Minnesota for the U.S. Open, where we've done well in the past and hope to do so again. A new season begins for the WFRA in January, and we're working with WOR on setting up an outdoor event for the Fallen Firefighters Network, which helps the families of firefighters who have been lost in the line of duty, or from cancer. We look forward to maintaining this relationship with the outdoor racquetball community for a long time.

Lastly, it is with great pleasure that the WFRA announced its newest member: Asher Paz Berger, the new son of WFRA founder Peter S. Berger and his wife Jenny. Born on May 12 - at 7 lbs 1 oz. and measuring an impressive 21.25" - Asher is looking forward to following in his father's footsteps to be a racquetball player!





# OUTDOORS AT THE MIAMI VA MEDICAL CENTER

Material submitted by Steven Harper

Photos by Belinda Dettman



(Left - Right): Rob Mijares (W.O.R. - Florida President), Christina Dugrot (Recreational Therapist of the Miami), Joe Congilio, Steven Harper, Justin Cooklin, and Pedro Curbelo.



Supporting Veterans: (Left - Right): Steven Harper, Joe Congilio, and Harvey Bernstein



Teaching Our Veterans (Left - Right): Pedro Curbelo and a veteran of the Miami VA

The Military Racquetball Federation teamed with the World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) of the Sunshine State and the Miami VA Medical Center to host another outdoor rehabilitation demonstration for Veterans and Wounded Warriors at the Arthur Snyder Tennis Park in North Miami in mid-June.

Special thanks to Joe Congilio for months of preparation in working with the VA to set a date to make this event possible. He coordinated volunteers and got approval from the city of North Miami to impact 11 veterans and VA staff members to showcase a new form of adaptive racquetball. This demo will lead to initiating an eight-week clinic for veterans in the local area.

Thanks to the awesome folks that volunteered at this event: Rob Mijares (Florida WOR President), Belinda Dettman, Luanne Pazos, Bryant Justin Cooklin, Harvey "GrillMaster" Bernstein, Pedro Curbelo and Danny! Their hard work paid off and will continue to help our veterans cope with their daily struggles. If you are willing help to set up a clinic in your area, please contact us for more information via email or under the "contact" tab at: [www.militaryracquetball.com](http://www.militaryracquetball.com).

## IN MEMORIAM

**SGT. Lam Le** (USMC - Ret) was a Hero, a Warrior, and a racquetball player with an unlimited reserve of passion for life and our sport.

There aren't words enough to give him our praise for how he supported the MRF cause.

Lam accomplished many amazing feats in his 24 years, learning how to compete in tennis and racquetball, jumping out of a plane and being an inspirational father and husband. Lam was never the kind of guy you could easily discourage or hold down, as evidenced by his soaring spirit and infectious grin [pictured far left on this cover], while bravely battling the cancer that eventually took his life. Semper Fi, Marine.





# Carson Wins Outdoor

## 10 TIMES OVER

from online IRT reporting

**W**ith a pair of national championships and a world championship already under his belt (this year alone!), IRT #2 ranked pro Rocky Carson added another impressive victory in the men's singles division at the World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) Championships in Huntington Beach, California, in mid-July. The win gave Carson his 10th WOR title, making him one of the most decorated outdoor players in history.

Carson defeated retired IRT pro Josh Tucker, 15-8, 15-12, for the title after winning his semifinal against #5 Daniel De La Rosa in a tough tiebreaker, 15-7, 12-15, 11-7. Tucker had advanced through a semifinal tiebreaker of his own, coming out ahead against the IRT's official referee and #11 ranked player Charlie Pratt, 15-14, 10-15, 11-7. IRT #12 Jose Diaz also competed in the event, falling to De La Rosa in the quarterfinals.

In Men's Doubles, #9 seeded team of Cliff Swain/Josh Tucker won the Outdoor Pro division in a two-game final against #7 Greg Lane/Scott Davis. The #1 seed team of Daniel De La Rosa/Alvaro Beltran suffered an early blow when Beltran had to pull out of the tournament due to injury.

Rob Mijares replaced the injured player, but the re-mixed De La Rosa/Mijares duo lost a quarterfinal tiebreaker to the #16 seeded team of Jose Diaz/Marco Rojas. In the next round, Diaz/Rojas faced and fell to Swain/Tucker who took the match in two games, 15-8, 15-6. The IRT's #6 ranked pro, Ben Croft, paired with Rod Frontino to face #7 Greg Lane/Scott Davis in the quarters, where Frontino/Croft won, 15-10, 15-4 only to lose to Lane/Davis in the semis 10-15, 4-15.

Swain/Tucker went on to win against #5 Rocky Carson/Jose Rojas 15-5, 15-10 in the semifinals for the right to face Lane/Davis for the championship, 15-5, 15-0.

Photo courtesy Restrungmag.com



## SCHEDULE

October 8-12	GS	UnitedHealthcare US Open Championships	Minneapolis, MN
October 17-19	T1	Pete Pierce's Party with the Pros	St. Louis, MO
November 6-9	T1	Red Swain Shootout	Davison, MI
November 13-16	T1	24th Annual Turkey Shootout	Garden City, KS
November 20-23	T1	Long Beach Open Doubles	Long Beach, CA
December 4-7	T1	Kitsap Splat Pro/Am	Washington
December 11-14	T1	ROLLOUT New Jersey Open	Fairfield, NJ
January 8-11	T1	Coast to Coast California Open	Fountain Valley, CA
January 15-18	T1	Cactus Salon NYC Pro/Am	Long Island, NY
January 22-25	T1	Lewis Drug Pro/Am	Sioux Falls, SD
March 6-8	T1	Florida IRT Pro/Am	Florida
March 12-15	T1	Shamrock Shootout	Lombard, IL
April 23-26	T1	IRT Pro Nationals	TBD
April 30 - May 3	T1	Stockton Pro/Am	Stockton, CA
May 14-17	T1	Pro Kennex Tournament of Champions	Portland, OR

## WEB OVERHAUL

*IRT-tour.com is undergoing a major overhaul, and it's all hands on deck to get the transition completed as soon as possible! So, combined with the great feature coverage of Rocky Carson, this issue offers the latest calendar of IRT Tier One events for the upcoming season.*

**Plan ahead!**



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- ROCKY CARSON

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GRAPHENE





ROCKY CARSON:

# THE WORLD'S BEST

*FOUR TIMES OVER*



Story by Jeff Oliver

Photos by Edson Hong, Courtesy Renaissance Athletic Club



**I**t's late June on a racquetball court outside Toronto when Rocky Carson wins match point against Bolivia's Conrado Moscoso to capture the 2014 International Racquetball Federation's (IRF) Mens' Singles World Championship. As Rocky shakes hands with his opponent, his US teammates and coaches – including his father RO – start to celebrate. The title becomes Carson's fourth consecutive IRF World Championship in singles, an all-time record, and it also secures the Overall Team



Championship for the United States.

The gold medal earned this summer was Rocky's 15th individual career title earned on the international stage. He first made the USA Racquetball National Team at the age of 19 and, in the 16 years since, has re-qualified for the national team in every year, minus only two terms in 1999 & 2002. When you add in five US National titles in singles and another three in doubles, Rocky's accomplishments while wearing the Red, White & Blue truly make him our premier ambassador.

As a touring professional on the International Racquetball Tour (IRT), Carson has won 18 tournaments, including a US OPEN. His 408 IRT match victories are how he makes a living for himself and his family, with wins that have earned him prize money, endorsements and sponsorship from HEAD Penn Racquet Sports, among others. "I've made my living playing professionally, and that's been about me. With that, in a lot of ways, it's a selfish reason, even though it's something I love doing," said Carson.

So what about all those amateur team titles earned on courts in Korea, Ireland, Latin America and elsewhere across the globe, playing for his country? Well, those are for all of us to enjoy. "When I get to play for my country, it's not just about me. It's about representing something much bigger," said Carson. "It's about representing not just my dreams, but a lot of other people's dreams too. To be in those shoes, to have the opportunity to go out there and perform at the biggest events for your own country, those things are special."

Rocky grew up in a Southern California racquetball household. His father RO owned and operated clubs where Rocky started swinging a racquet at a very young age. RO coached Rocky through an impressive junior career that captured seven consecutive USA Racquetball Junior National Singles Championships, but the coach/dad arrangement wasn't always perfect. "Sometimes I didn't want to be coached. Sometimes I didn't want to hear anything. [Dad] would let me cool off. He would let me go through those things, but he gave me direction," said Rocky.

It was that direction that shaped a path for Rocky as he became an adult. Rocky remembers RO telling him, "You can practice 3-4 days a week and you'll probably hold steady, maybe, and even grow a little bit. But if you want to live your dreams and be

*“To walk in the stadium in opening ceremonies and to hear sometimes up to 100,000 people standing, cheering for you and USA or whatever it might be when you come in, it’s always special.”*



a professional athlete, it’s up to you. But that’s going to take 4 or 5 to 6 days a week. It’s your decision, and if you treat it as your job, I’ll treat it as your job.”

Rocky’s dreams have been realized and have created many great memories. His family, including RO, have been present for the IRF World Championship wins in Ireland, the Dominican Republic, and Canada. Carson’s most memorable moments, however, come from the Pan American Games, the largest international sporting event for the Americas outside the Olympics. Rocky’s first Pan American Games was in 2003 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. “To walk in the stadium in opening ceremonies and to hear sometimes up to 100,000 people standing, cheering for you and USA or whatever it might be when you come in, it’s always special. It’s something that you’ll never forget as a player ... I know I’ll never forget.”

Rocky captured the bronze medal at the 2003 Pan American Games. At the 2011 Games, Rocky sought the one major title that had eluded him. “This was one I hadn’t won. It was also one that I looked at as being, possibly, the biggest stage at the biggest event that our sport is a part of,” said Rocky. On that big stage, Carson prevailed and brought home the Gold. In 2015, the Pan American Games will once again welcome the sport of racquetball to competition in Toronto.

During recent international competitions over the past couple of years, Rocky has been part of many winning US

teams. However he’s also seen the influx of talent coming from the Latin American countries. He sees the competition among our own junior players diminishing, yet knows there are far more racquetball courts in our country compared to others. As a junior coach at Renaissance Club Sport in Orange County, Calif., Rocky is facing this battle head-on and has dreams of expanding his efforts.

“I think it’s great to have racquetball courts everywhere, but we need to work together to create programs that get kids on the court consistently. If we’re able to do that and we’re able to give that guidance to the kids at a younger age, I think we’re going to have a lot more competition,” said Rocky.

To that end, Rocky is putting plans in motion to lend his name, his passion, and his knowledge to grow the game his loves. “I love sharing information that I developed throughout my career and over the years, sometimes through my own experiences, sometimes through advice from others,” said Rocky.

Aside from being a great racquetball player, a father, and a surfer, Carson is one of the sport’s most knowledgeable nutritionists. For almost a decade, Rocky has partnered with AdvoCare® for his daily and competitive routine, using products like Spark, Muscle Fuel, and Post-Workout Recovery for tournament preparation. In addition to creating USAR nutritional awareness programs, the partnership with AdvoCare® is now directly benefiting USA Racquetball Junior Programs with funding.



Online at [rballfuel.com](http://rballfuel.com), players can follow Rocky's training regime and order the same protein or energy drinks he relies on, with 100% of all net proceeds devoted to USA Racquetball. Rocky wants to help USAR get beyond the last 10 to 20 years of financial challenge through partnership with a company like AdvoCare®, which has annual revenues in the hundreds of millions to use as a vehicle to reach the next level.

But Rocky also knows that growing the game is about much more than just funding. He has strong sentiments about where the game is currently and where USA Racquetball has growth potential. "Right now we're just an organization that has people that play racquetball," said Carson. "However, when we get people aware of where we want to go as an organization and the way we want to come together, then we'll be able to grow together."



While Rocky is looking forward to being a leader in the future of US racquetball, there are no plans for a retirement from play anytime soon. "I want to be

a part of this sport, playing whether I'm winning or losing," said Rocky. "Because one thing I know is, I love stepping on that court, and I love to compete."

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- ROCKY CARSON  
FOUR-TIME WORLD CHAMPION



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Terry Rogers



Linda Moore

This is the upbeat attitude of the WSMRA player! Many take part even when they can't play, to see their friends and help out. Last year, 3 of the 4 people staffing the desk never got

on a court – including long-time player Lola Markus who just came to support her friends and assist with the silent auction. That's dedication!

A nice, warm racquetball court is the perfect place to be in mid-January, so join us in the Twin Cities for plenty of fun, a lot of racquetball, and you might even learn a thing or two from WSMRA Board member and USAR Hall-of Famer Debbie Tisinger-Moore. The format is round-robin for all age groups 35 and up, with Open/A and B/C divisions in both singles and doubles. Find the group on Facebook or WSMRA.com. See you in Minnesota where - who knows - there may even be some ice fishing in the mix!

## USA Racquetball LEADERS COME TOGETHER

by Leo Vasquez

In early May, the USA Racquetball Leadership Conference was held at the flagship U.S. Olympic Committee training center in Colorado Springs, bringing together state association board members, national organization representatives, and guest speakers to share best practices, programs and ideas vital to the sport's future and growth.

Drawing on local and national industry experts, Executive Director **Steve Czarniecki** gathered a top-notch lineup of speakers to offer significant insights on strategic planning, fundraising, and volunteer leadership roles with National Governing Bodies. These dedicated professionals were gracious with their time, and the U.S. Olympic Committee was equally generous in contributing toward the costs of having them be on hand to share their extraordinary experiences.

**DAY ONE** // Most participants were dormitoried "on campus" and shared dining, recreational facilities and other services designed to support up to 557 coaches and athletes that can be housed on the complex at any one time. After check-in, a kickoff meeting addressed the strategic planning process, where **Phil Rader**, of Rader Consulting, led a lively discussion about the wants and needs of USAR constituents. The evening concluded with a beautiful reception, sponsored by Head/Penn, followed by the group making its way to the Olympic torch on an adjacent balcony, to overlook the inspirational Training Center grounds and mountain vista.

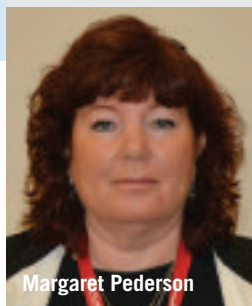
**DAY TWO** // The first full day featured guest speakers and industry experts, along with open discussion time. R2sports

*continued on page 29 >>*

## WSMRA UPDATE

**[ MORE ] WRITERS WANTED** // In preparing this update, I asked a few WSMRA players for comments about our tournament and got such great responses that we're now planning to expand this into an online feature. I'd love to hear from you! Email a few sentences to [kd-tutsch@wisc.edu](mailto:kd-tutsch@wisc.edu), letting us know what you like best about the Women's Senior/Masters tournament, what keeps you coming back, and why you enjoy racquetball.

**LPRT SCHOLARSHIPS** // Last year the WSMRA donated money to the Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT) to help start a "scholarship fund" to allow rising young players to compete on tour. Thanks to WSMRA support, the first round of LPRT Scholarships went to six players, who all finished in the top 30 (three in the top 20). Aubrey Kirch finished her first LPRT season ranked #7 and also qualified for a spot on the US National Team. See the full list of scholars on page 14.



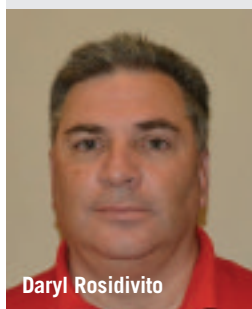
Margaret Pederson

The first night of the 2014 Leadership Conference In Colorado Springs was so exciting as all the State Directors and USAR staff met and mingled at the Olympic Training Center's rooftop while the Olympic torch was lit right above us. What an honor it was to be there representing California and the sport.

Change is in the wind! The Conference was a huge success. So many ideas were presented and decisions were made. The USAR staff was so thoughtful and thorough with program. We are in the best hands with the current USAR staff, and wait till you see the changes coming! The R2 site is undergoing additional changes ... a new Collegiate instructional certification program, implemented by Jim Hiser ... John Ellis's new Jamboree league format, just to name a few. I want to thank the OTC and USAR for making all this possible.

The future of racquetball is very bright! Everyone left the Conference feeling very energized about the sport we love.

**- Margaret Pederson, Northern California VP**



Daryl Rosidivito

I had a nice time at the recent leadership conference. It was a valuable two days spent sharing state and national level issues, concerns and success stories. The state representatives were provided an open forum to express our thoughts and concerns at the national level. I took home some immediate actionable content for my board and have already scheduled a meeting to share what was learned. I encourage all state organizations to attend the next session.

**-Daryl Rosidivito, Pennsylvania State Racquetball Association.**



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## CONTINUING THE *Making of a Champion*

by Fran Davis (*The Coach*) • Diana McNab (*Sports Psychologist*) • Dan Obremski (*Fitness Expert*)

Okay, let's continue "Making You a Champion" using the core principles of "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" as you build your championship racquetball game one assessment at a time. This will allow you to always complete the "Racquetball Success Triangle" we introduced earlier. In the Spring 2014 issue, I discussed the general concept of "The Serve," a key element in creating your "championship game."

I'd like to expand upon "The Serve" and discuss how to make your serve deceptive. The more deceptive your serve, the more you keep the receiver guessing and off balance thereby forcing weak returns. Having the same step, swing and follow through, and only changing where you drop the ball (Ball Toss), affects the Contact Point, which creates deception.

### Let's take a look below at the different ball drops for the drive serve.

- If you drop the ball approximately off the inner thigh to heel or little toe of your lead foot, you will hit a Drive Z Serve.
- If you drop the ball approximately off the arch of your lead foot, you will hit a Drive Serve Down the Line, which is defined as being on the same side of the court you are on.
- If you drop the ball approximately off the big toe of your lead foot, you will hit a Drive Serve Cross Court, which is defined as being on the opposite side of the court you are on.
- If you drop the ball in-between the big toe and the little toe of your lead foot, you will hit a Drive Wrap, Jam or Nick.

The Ball Toss and consequently your Contact Points are only inches apart. Your opponent, the receiver, is approximately 20 feet behind you so he/she cannot see where your Contact Point really is. This makes your serve very deceptive and keeps your opponent guessing, a very important element in the service game.

With this information, let's address the four skill areas needed to help make you a more consistent and positive player, a must in developing your championship game.

### 1-RACQUETBALL SKILLS

Practice low and hard drives first from all three positions (except no Drive Z's from position #2). Do one position at a time, pick one type of serve at a time, and then perform the serve to both sides of the court by changing the ball toss (15 or 20 to the right and then 15 or 20 to the left depending upon your level of play).

Rocky, Jason, and Paola as well as the rest of my championship team do this to make sure they keep their opponents guessing. This will pay big dividends for them to play at the top of their games.

### 2-MENTAL SKILLS

Here's a great way to visualize:

Put on your iPod to your favorite music and start visualizing your perfect deceptive drive serves. Visualization involves creating images in your mind of what you want to reproduce on the court. Your sports brain works through pictures, not words, and does not know the difference between a vividly imagined picture in your head and actual reality. The benefit is that you get a 30% neuroelectrical contraction no matter what, so your brain is triggering your muscles. As a result, when a serve you visualized comes up during a match, your body will proactively respond to those prior images. Perfect mental practice leads to perfect results.

Jason, Paola, and Rocky all use this technique of visualization to enhance their play, and it is evident in their games.

### 3-FITNESS SKILLS

Power is speed multiplied by force. In other words, how quickly and with how much force can you move? In sports we think of explosion when we think of power. How quickly can you act, react, or move with definite force? A good example is the drive serve, which involves speed with force, equaling power. If you have more power on your drive serves, this will give your opponent less time to react, forcing more weak returns and giving you an opportunity to score easier points on your serve. Add this power with more deception and your opponent will for sure



be even more frustrated, leading to set ups.

Paola, Rocky, and Jason have fitness trainers that work with them on a regular basis and focus on developing more power.

#### 4-NUTRITION SKILLS

Like fitness skills, nutritional skills are usually overlooked as many athletes suffer from dehydration and cramping. They often run out of energy and cannot perform at their best. This is when you start to feel weak, and you can lose power in your serves.

You want to make sure your eating habits are second to none and that you drink lots of water. Your body and mind need this in order to allow your body to hit serve after serve with power and to allow your mind to think more clearly about the ball toss to create more deception.

Jason, Paola, and Rocky all know how to enjoy themselves, but it's about making better choices. This is a way of life for them.

Additional details on the points covered in this article can be found in my book, *Championship Racquetball*, Chapters 3, 9, and 10.

Hope to see you at one of my camps for live personal instruction. Or, buy my video, *Building Your Racquetball Dream House* or my book, *Championship Racquetball*, or buy my App if you can't make a camp at this time. For details go to: [FranDavisRacquetball.com](http://FranDavisRacquetball.com).

*Fran Davis coaches Paola Longoria (#1 LPRT), Rocky Carson (#2 IRT), Taylor Knoth (#1 Jr. National and World Champion, and Sharon Jackson (#1 National Intercollegiate Champion). Hall of Fame 2004, Woman of the Year 2009, former US Team National Coach, Master Professional Instructors (USAR-IP)*

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Taylor Knoth  
Jr. World Champion

Sharon Jackson  
Jr. Nat'l Champion

Jason Mannino  
#1 Pro Player 2003

Rocky Carson  
#1 Pro Player 2008

Paola Longoria  
2X #1 Pro Player

Sudsy Monchik  
5X #1 Pro Player

#### Fran's Credentials

- 25+ Years Camp Experience
- Woman of the Year 2009
- 2004 Hall of Fame
- U. S. National Team Coach 1989-1996, 2002
- Pan American/World Championship Coach
- USOC National Coach of the Year 1997
- Coaches Rocky Carson, Paola Longoria, Taylor Knoth, Sharon Jackson
- Coached Legends Jason Mannino and Sudsy Monchik
- USAR-IP Master Professional

#### Jason's Credentials

- #1 IRT Professional Player 2003
- 2X U.S. Open Champion
- IRT Most Improved Player 1998
- IRT Rookie of the Year 1996
- International Racquetball Tour President

#### Camp Schedule:

##### Weekend Camps 2014

September 5-7 San Antonio, TX  
October 17-19 New England  
November 7-9 Chicago, IL

##### Weekend Camps 2015

January 16-18 Sarasota, FL  
January 30-Feb. 1 Seattle, WA  
March 13-15 Findlay, OH  
April 10-12 Las Vegas, NV  
May 1-3 Warren, NJ

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# DID THE BALL TOUCH THE FLOOR *BEFORE* it went Out?

by Otto Dietrich, USA Racquetball National Rules Commissioner

*"... Does your court have a red line drawn about 12 feet high all the way across the back wall? What's that all about?"*

photo by Geoff Thomsen



The next time you step onto a racquetball court, take a brief moment to look at the back wall. To be legal under USA Racquetball rules, the back wall must be at least 12 feet high and fully playable up to that height. The back walls on most courts probably do meet that standard. But some may also extend higher, possibly all the way to the ceiling, and it still might be "in play." It basically depends upon whether the higher part is in the same alignment – if so, it's likely "in play"!

Of course, if the upper portion is not in alignment with the rest of the backwall, then it is clearly "out-of-play" as called for in Rule 2.1(a). There is one other factor involved in assessing the playability of the back wall. That is the possibility that some or all of the upper portion is of a different material than the lower portion. That's okay, too, unless that different material causes the ball to rebound noticeably different from the lower portion.

Does your court have a red line drawn about 12 feet high all the way across the back wall? What's that all about? It's a generally about a rather long-term and persistent misreading of the original rule. USAR's version does not say the back wall "... is 12 feet high. . .", but rather that it must be "... at least 12 feet high. . ." However, some clubs in the U.S. still have a 12-foot line drawn on the back wall even though it is not specified in the USAR rulebook.

That said, your club may have a valid reason for that 12-foot line. Some other sets of racquetball rules – principally those of the International Racquetball Federation and the Racquetball Canada -- still limit the playability of the back wall to no more than 12 feet. Many years ago, USA Racquetball determined that there really was no prevailing reason to declare any portion of an otherwise playable portion of the back wall as being "out-of-play." From a pure playing perspective, the rules governing all other walls don't prescribe any particular "legal height" for one's shot hitting the walls, so why should there be one regarding the back wall? Why should hitting the ball into the back

wall demand any more accuracy than that for the other walls? Why should a player be penalized because the club limited the wall's size for viewing or ventilation purposes?

Also, assessing this issue from an officiating perspective, imagine you are refing a match while standing directly behind the back wall either from above or at floor level up near the back wall. Suddenly and unexpectedly, one player hits the ball directly into the back wall. Now the ref has to assess whether that ball hit above, below, or possibly on, a line on the back wall that's (1) directly below him or else (2) directly above him. He is likely in an area that is surely not within the range of direct eyesight. So, how can the ref make an accurate call? If there is an appeal, would the line judges really have a proper view to allow them to render an accurate opinion about the referee's call? Tournament directors also have found it rather troublesome to put such a line on those courts that don't have them if and when they need them. Accordingly, USA Racquetball found the simplest solution was just to play the ball the way it rebounds – even off of the back wall.

Of course, no thorough discussion of the height of the back wall would be complete without touching on the rules governing what happens if the ball does leave the court during play. If a serve is hit so hard that it goes out of the court without being touched by the receiver, then the only question is whether that served ball touched the floor before it went out. If it did, that is a dead-ball serve, but if not, then it is an out serve. See Rules 3.8 (c) and 3.10(h) respectively. Conversely, should the ball go out-of-play after the serve, the question is still "did the ball touch the floor before it went out?" In this case, if it did, it is a replay hinder, but if not, then it is a loss of rally for the player who last hit the ball. The specific rule references for those outcomes are Rules 3.14(a) 1 and 3.13(c).

## DO YOU HAVE A RULES/REFEREEING QUESTION?

Be sure to email it to me at [rules@usra.org](mailto:rules@usra.org) and you might find it featured in an upcoming issue of *Racquetball Magazine*. I will personally answer every question I get, no matter how simple or complex it may be!

## Always Play by the Rules

... and, if you don't have a copy of them, I encourage you to go online where you can find, review, and/or download them – especially to your Smartphone – at:

[teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules](http://teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules).



founder Ryan Rodgers demonstrated new features and updates for the tournament management software. A keynote address by **Emily Davis** shared her insights on volunteer leadership, fundraising, and board recruitment, followed by a book signing by the popular author.

Later, the USOC's **Chad Sunderland** provided an excellent model on how USA Racquetball and state associations could work together for the sport. In a group exercise, all attendees were given red and green colored miniature racquets to engage and vote on the importance of roles and responsibilities between the state and national organization.

**Jim Hiser** detailed the new USAR-IP Instructor and Coaches Program, which is now available to provide a wealth of continuing education and course materials online. Texas Racquetball Association President Leo Vasquez followed up by unveiling a companion TXRA Instructor Program that incentivizes instructors to become certified with USAR-IP. Usher Barnoff weighed into discussions on the player ranking system and answered questions.

The highlight of the evening was a reception at the El Pomar Foundation's historic Penrose House - formerly the home of Spencer and Julie Penrose, which now serves as an education and conference center available to the nonprofit community. Everyone enjoyed refreshments, hors d'oeuvres and exclusive tours of the facility, which is an exquisite example of early 20th century architecture and houses one of the best art collections in Colorado.

**DAY THREE //** The final day was filled with more presentations and open discussions, opening with new developments for both the referee certification and collegiate instructional programs. LPRT Deputy Commissioner **Andy Kulback** previewed the ladies pro tour and its new season, and **Cindy Tilbury** updated current programs of the WSMRA and NMRA organizations. **Dave Ellis** shared his Racquetball Jamboree idea for league play, which he uses successfully in California to keep leagues competitive and social. Continuing on the event side, risk management expert **Kevin Joyce** addressed insurance concerns, such as safety issues when hosting a sanctioned event and how to handle claims.

**TEAM USA insiders** - Coach **Dave Ellis**, **Cheryl Kirk** and **Geoff Peters** - talked about the adult and junior national teams and related fundraising efforts. Hall of Famer Dr. Shannon Wright and Kathleen Klukas from the U.S. Racquetball Foundation opened their presentation with a "Grow Your Junior Program Scavenger Hunt" to re-energize the group, then outlined how their programs are dedicated to the growth and preservation of the sport in the United States.

**Steve Czarnecki** announced the USAR partnership with Advocare products to offer the line to members through an online promotion, introduced new Membership Manager **Bob Bodor**, and documented the conference with a group photo that was later featured on the cover of the summer issue of *Racquetball Magazine*.

Board members **Larry Haemmerle**, **Peter McMillin**, **Peggin Tellez** and **Leo Vasquez** hosted the wrap-up panel session, where attendees were encouraged to ask questions directly about the impact, scope and strategic plans of USA Racquetball.

The leadership conference is an important means of bringing people together to get valuable perspective and strategies that are critical for success. Please reach out to

anyone on your state board that is actively involved and get connected with them to become more engaged in your grassroots programs and activities.



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## AN INTERVIEW WITH INTERIM US JUNIOR TEAM COACH CHERYL GUDINAS

By Cheryl Kirk

**Q** After working with Kelley Beane as one of her assistant coaches for 15 years, you are now the Head Honcho. From your perspective, what were the similarities and differences between this camp and camps in prior years?

**A** There weren't that many differences, really. Kelley and I felt that whatever we have

been doing has been fairly successful, so why change up too much? We did the usual fun and challenging things that the kids expect, like the Simulation Run and the Incline. As a coach, you definitely want them going home knowing that the week was demanding. As hard as some of those things are, the reality is that the athletes would have been disappointed had we not done them. Those are the staples in the camp.

**Q** Did you feel any differently?

**A** Yes, I must admit that it did feel different. Not only did we work together for 15 years, but Kelley's my best friend. So there was a certain sadness to that. However, luckily, I have Coach Nick to pick up the humor side of it that Kelley always provided. I think the kids, and even the parents now, know how much joking Kelley and I did to lighten things up. Nick has caught on pretty well in this department. Coach Jody has become a great friend the last few years. As Nick says: Jody is like a "well-oiled machine" on the court. And Jim Hiser is Jim Hiser...still yelling in the mornings, giving the coaches a hard time in jest, and giving awesome lectures.

**Q** What legacies do you value from Coach Kelley Beane's leadership?

**A** I think the biggest legacy is that Kelley was always more concerned with the players' lives than their racquetball games or the number of matches they won for Team USA. As long as this staff is involved, that's always how it will be, because that is really the most important thing. Kelley never wanted anyone involved who didn't, without a doubt, value that above all else. Believe me, every year there is at least one situation, or more, that the coaches handle that is not racquetball-related. And no one ever knows it, or hears about it, except the coaching team. We become family, and we have our trust and our secrets! It's very important that we know the kids, understand what they go through (in school, at home, etc.), how they feel, their personalities, how they will react to certain styles of coaching. It's only if we really understand them as PEOPLE that we can be effective.



## 2014 JUNIOR TEAM TRAINING CAMP

By Bob Bodor | Photos Jim Hiser

The U.S. Junior National Team gathered at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, July 29 - August 2, to prepare for the 2014 World Championships in Cali, Colombia. Head Coach Cheryl Gudinas along with assistants Nick Montalbano, Jodi Nance, and Jim Hiser, led 16 athletes through a comprehensive week of training on the OTC grounds as well as the Downtown YMCA that included early morning workouts, two on-court sessions daily, video analysis, and productive nightly team meetings.

Coach Gudinas observed, "I thought Training Camp went really well. The primary goal was to create some team unity, which I'm certain we accomplished. Another goal was to ensure that all of the athletes know that hard work makes champions. The kids were definitely exhausted by the time camp ended. Jim Hiser was able to videotape everybody, and we were able to give feedback about where their games are now, and what they need to do in the next few months to improve. The team is looking good; they all have a pretty good idea of what they need to do between now and October to become World Champions."

### CAMP DIARY

**TUESDAY, 8:30 PM:** First team meeting at the Olympic Training Center. After a long day of travel, players reported in from seven different states. Expectations were set by Coach Gudinas and staff. Camp underway!

**WEDNESDAY, 6:30 AM:** The team ran to Memorial Park, where Hiser and Montalbano led a series of challenging exercises, as athletes immediately discovered their own level of conditioning!

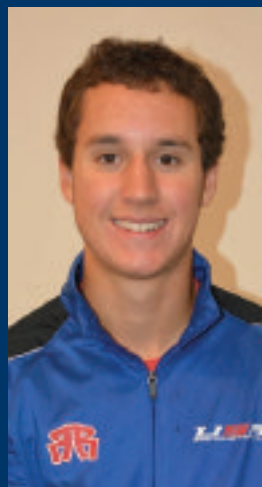
**10:00 AM:** First time on the courts at the Colorado Springs Downtown YMCA. Theme of the morning was "Practice with a Purpose."

**7:00 PM:** Team meeting back at the OTC. Team Captains were elected by the team, with Adam Manilla and Lexi York being selected to lead the team in Colombia. Jim Hiser gave another insightful and inspiring lecture to the team.

**THURSDAY, 6:30 AM:** Simulation Run! Great effort by the team, some of whom are already in top tournament condition.

**9:30 AM:** Team and individual photos at the OTC Visitors Center before going to the YMCA for five hours of court time.





**World Team Captains**  
**Adam Manilla & Lexi York**



**Camp Challenge winners Jordan**  
**Cooperrider & Nick Birnel**

**5:00 PM:** Strength and conditioning session in the brand new USOC weight room on the Olympic Training Center campus. Great session with focus on training methods, plyometrics and conditioning strategies to insure peak performance in Cali.

**FRIDAY, 6:30 AM:** The team conquered the famed Manitou Incline... a 2,000 foot elevation gain in one mile, ending up at 8,600 feet above sea level! Sam Bredenbeck, Wayne Antone, and Jake Birnel were the first to summit and return.

**10:00 AM:** Jim Hiser sat down with every athlete and reviewed their court videos, to show each what they are doing well and what they could do to improve. Even world class athletes can benefit from technique review and adjustments.

**2:00 PM:** Singles Round Robin matches begin!

## 2014 US JUNIOR NATIONAL TEAM QUALIFIERS

### BOYS

Wayne	Antone IV	Junction City, OR	Boy's 16 Singles Runner-Up
Jordan	Barth	Cold Spring, MN	Boy's 16 Doubles Champion and 14 Singles Champion
Justus	Benson	Sun Prairie, WI	Boy's 16 Doubles Champion
Ricardo	Diaz	Stockton, CA	Boy's 14 Doubles Champion
Dane	Elkins	Los Angeles, CA	Boy's 14 Doubles Champion
Connor	Laffey	Salem, OR	Boy's 18 Singles Runner-Up
Sawyer	Lloyd	Petaluma, CA	Boy's 18 Doubles Champion
Adam	Manilla	Centennial, CO	Boy's 18 Singles and Doubles Champion
Akul	Ramayani	Poughkeepsie, NY	Boy's 14 Singles Runner-Up
Mauro	Rojas	Stockton, CA	Boy's 16 Singles Champion

### GIRLS

Kaitlyn	Boyle	Beaverton, OR	Girl's 14 Singles and Doubles Champion
Jordan	Cooperrider	Palm Harbor, FL	Girl's 16 Singles and Doubles Champion
Danielle	Falvey	Sussex, WI	Girl's 18 Doubles Champion
Hollee	Hungerford	Milwaukie, OR	Girl's 18 Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up
Briana	Jacquet	Golden, CO	Girl's 14 Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up
Erika	Manilla	Centennial, CO	Girl's 16 Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up
Hollie	Scott	Lynden, WA	Girl's 18 Singles Champion
Lexi	York	Milwaukie, OR	Girls #1 Gold High School Champion

## 2014-15 U.S. ESPRIT RACQUETBALL TEAM

### BOYS

Nick	Birnel	Bellingham, WA	Boy's 12 Doubles Champion
Timmy	Hansen	Wellington, FL	Boy's 10 Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up
Akul	Ramayani	Poughkeepsie, NY	Boy's 12 Singles Champion
Antonio	Rojas	Stockton, CA	Boy's 12 Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up
Josh	Shea	Cortland Manor, NY	Boy's 10 Doubles Champion
Krish	Thakur	Tracy, CA	Boy's 10 Singles Champion

### GIRLS

Hannah	Carver	Spokane, WA	Girl's 12 Singles Runner-Up
Nikita	Chauhan	San Ramon, CA	Girl's 12 Singles Champion
Heather	Mahoney	Penngrove, CA	Girl's 10 Singles and Doubles Champion
Rei	McCormick	Urbandale, IA	Girl's 12 Doubles Champion
Julia	Stein	Murrysville, PA	Girl's 10 Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up
Graciana	Wargo	Clearwater, FL	Girl's 12 Doubles Champion



**6:00 PM:** Team Dinner at Bambino's, for a great night to relax away from the OTC and enjoy the camaraderie of teammates and staff. This team has really come together this week and is going to be a strong unit in October.

**SATURDAY, 6:30 AM:** Final morning run and training session.

**1:30 PM:** Round Robin matches conclude, Jake Birnel topped Adam Manilla to win the boys' draw while

Jordan Cooperrider defeated Lexi York in the tiebreaker to take the girls' draw.

**7:00 PM:** Last team meeting of the week. Thanks to everyone with the United States Olympic Committee and to Myles Hayes at USA Racquetball for all the hard work on arrangements. Team USA made huge strides at the camp and we are all looking forward to watching them win a World Championship in Cali, beginning October 19.

**Q** *What's the easiest thing about running a junior camp? Hardest?*

**A** I'm a perfectionist, so nothing seems easy. The only easy thing I could really identify is being around the kids once we get there. Organizationally, there is a lot to remember. I realize this year how much Kelley had to actually do to make this happen.

**Q** *How do you feel about the US Team's chances in Cali, Colombia, this October?*

**A** As I always approach all of MY own matches, I say it's going to be tough. I say that only because I don't want anyone going in mentally under-prepared or thinking this is going to be easy. No champions have ever been built with the mentality that it's going to be a cakewalk. Obviously, Bolivia and Mexico will be the top teams to beat. When you recognize it's going to be a tough road and give all of your opponents respect, you come in prepared for any challenge. That's what we want. But, I do like our chances.

**Q** *What will the team need to concentrate on, individually and collectively, to be ready for Colombia?*

**A** One of the things we focused on at camp is being in the best condition that you can be. Athletes should never lose matches because they're tired. In addition, each one of them needs to stick up for what they believe in on the court and be confident. I think that's one of the areas we fell short on last year: referees making calls and the athletes just going with it, not sticking up for themselves when it was right to do so.

**Q** *Who would you like to recognize/thank for their help with the camp?*

**A** As I said to them at camp, Bob Bodor, Myles Hayes, Joe Williams, and Steve Czarnecki from USA Racquetball have been amazing. All of those guys came to practices, workouts, and meetings. I'm sure this would not have gone as smoothly without Myles. His never-ending communication with myself and Lindsay Evens at the Olympic Training Center made this all work. It was pure joy. If Kelley Beane did all that in the past, I truly don't know how she did it. This new staff is incredible.

Thanks to Jim Hiser for his dedication to the Split Step and video analysis, and for always opening his heart to these kids... This is a side to himself that he rarely gives, that few see. Thank you to Coach Nick Montalbano for keeping things lively. His laugh is delightful. Nick's ability to step up and take charge when needed is appreciated immensely. And Coach Jody Nance, with whom I share many similar life experiences, will be cherished for a lifetime. Thanks to Kelley Beane. She confessed to perhaps being in the wrong place while we were at camp.

**Q** *What three words would you use to describe the 2014 US Junior Team Camp in COS?*

**A** Aside from Inspiring, Challenging, and Rewarding, let's just say: "It's A Go."

Staffers L-R: Nick Montalbano, Jody Nancy, Cheryl Gudinas, Jim Hiser





# IRF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Article & Photos  
by Cheryl Kirk



Back Row L-R: Carson, Rojas, Huff, Croft.  
Front: Ellis, Ruiz, Furhrmann, Tisinger, Kirch, Rajsich, Carson, Kirk.

June 14-21, 2014 • Burlington, Ontario, Canada

**T**he IRF Worlds is held every other year and determines World Champions in both singles and doubles. Over 100 players from 21 countries (4 continents) were scheduled to compete in Burlington. Countries represented were Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Catalonia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Poland, Puerto Rico, Ukraine, United States, and Venezuela.

Before diving into this year's competition, we took the opportunity to reflect back on the last IRF Worlds in 2012 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Rocky Carson was singles gold medalist while Jansen Allen and Tony Carson took silver in the men's doubles. Rhonda Rajsich and Cheryl Gudinas were bronze medalists as were the doubles team of Rhonda and partner Aimee Ruiz. The US won the Men's Team gold, Women's Team silver, and Overall Team gold. Now, on to this year's competition ...

## OPENING CEREMONIES | FRIDAY, JUNE 13

Coaches Dave Ellis and RO Carson, along with USAR Executive Director Steve Czarnecki, attended the Coaches Meeting at 12:00 noon at the Burlington Holiday Inn & Convention Centre where coaches and delegates received information on transportation, format, schedule, uniforms, and the draws.

Racquetball Canada and the Burlington Host Committee (chaired by Adrian Webb) did a wonderful job of presenting a first-class Opening Ceremonies. The Atrium of the hotel was beautifully decorated with flowers, flags, and a Canadian maple leaf shaped in red balloons on a white background. The Parade of Nations commenced promptly at 5:00 pm when countries were announced and players marched into the atrium proudly wearing their official team attire. Young girls from the area carried signs announcing the names of the countries, and the delegations carried their flags.

Dignitary speeches, the athletes' and referees' oaths and an impressive performance by the Burlington Teen Tour Band Drumline capped off the festivities, and Pachi, the official Toronto 2015 mascot, made an appearance to greet the athletes and guests.

## FIRST DAY OF COMPETITION | SATURDAY

Team USA proudly sported their red, white, and blue on Flag Day, and they did you all proud in this most excellent first day of round robin competition. US Team players won each and every scheduled match in two games.

The coveted "Mirror Image" award (I made that up) goes to Ben and Tom who wowed the delegation by taking the "doubles teams must wear matching shirts and

shorts" rule to a whole new level, showing up in matching shoes, socks, and headbands as well. Way to raise the bar, guys!

The Women's Doubles Group B was dubbed "The Pool of Death" by some of the players within, reason being that the 3rd and 9th ranked players on the LPRT are in this group. Some very tough teams ended up here together due to seeding calculated from prior years when circumstances were different (FYI, countries are seeded vs. individuals). [Pictured below L-R: Ruiz/Tisinger vs. Samantha Salas Solis & Paola Longoria.]

## TEAM USA LOGS ANOTHER GREAT DAY | SUNDAY

With the women's singles and men's doubles off with byes today, the US Team's match schedule was abbreviated but still action-filled. José and Rocky took on Pablo and Fernando Kurzbard in their respective singles matches, and in one game apiece, the brothers gave them as much as they could handle: really world-class racquetball out there on the courts.

Coach Dave Ellis commented, "The two Kurzbards from Argentina have

## THE US TEAM DELEGATION:

### *Men's Singles*

**Rocky Carson**, Ladera Ranch, CA  
**José Rojas**, Stockton, CA

### *Men's Doubles*

**Ben Croft**, San Luis Obispo, CA  
**Tom Fuhrmann**, Carpinteria, CA

### *Women's Singles*

**Rhonda Rajsich**, Fountain Hills, AZ  
**Aubrey Kirch**, Citrus Heights, CA

### *Women's Doubles*

**Aimee Ruiz**, Whitehouse Station, NJ  
**Janel Tisinger**, Simi Valley, CA

**Staff:** **Dave Ellis**, Stockton, CA, Head Coach; **RO Carson**, Santa Maria, CA, Assistant Coach; **Brent Huff**, St. Charles, IL, Athletic Trainer; **Cheryl Kirk**, Naperville, IL, Team Leader.



improved markedly, and José Rojas and Rocky Carson were both pressed during their matches. Both of our guys hung tough, each winning one of their two games easily and winning the second with lots of effort and clutch shots. All of our players realize that the level of competition in international play has increased significantly over the last 10 years. There are no easy matches.

"I'm really happy with Aimee and Janel's efforts. The ladies played one of their best matches together against a couple of tough young players from Guatemala, coached by Tom Travers."

#### **"ROUNDING OUT" THE ROUND ROBINS | MONDAY**

Back to a full schedule...everyone played today on this final day of round robin competition. After the last match was finished, the draws were put together based on round robin results, and the schedule was set for the remainder of the competition in Olympic format.

Coach Ellis recapped the day: "The matches today were all competitive. We had three solid wins and a tiebreaker victory. There were a couple of losses, however: Aubrey fell to Maria Paz Muñoz of Ecuador, who played arguably the best racquetball of her life, in the tiebreaker. José Rojas was defeated by Ecuador's Fernando Rios, also in the tiebreaker. The losses were disappointing since they will place José and Aubrey on the same sides of the main draws as Rocky and Rhonda. Even worse, it's likely that Aubrey will have to play Rhonda in the 16's on Wednesday. Good news was that Aimee and Janel got it together and defeated Veronica Sotomayor and Maria Paz Muñoz after losing the first game and being down in the second. It was donut time in the tiebreaker as the USA ladies were just too tough. Ben and Tom are really clicking and demolished a good Costa Rican doubles team."

#### **HISTORY-MAKING INTERNATIONAL ROMANCE!**

Peter Rakowski (he alone comprising Team Poland at the IRF World Championships), along with cooperation from his "former girlfriend" Violeta, made IRF history off the court. Peter had booked a helicopter flight over Niagara Falls as a birthday present for Violeta. "After that, I was thinking it might be a fine idea to propose marriage this way."

Peter said he had known for over a month that he would propose, but he didn't know exactly when he would do it. The evening of June 15, 2014, he popped the question. "Even

though the helicopter was loud, I'm pretty sure she said yes. She didn't toss me out of the helicopter."

#### **FIRST DAY OF MAIN DRAWS | TUESDAY**

The US Team competed on an abbreviated schedule (singles only), and the results couldn't have been better!

Coach Ellis remarked that he was happy about the play during the Team's four singles matches. "Aubrey, Rhonda, Rocky, and José all played solidly against their early-round opponents. The matches will be tougher tomorrow for the men as we move deeper into the draw. We're lamenting that Aubrey and Rhonda have to meet so early in the women's draw. The winner will move on in the Gold division and the loser will drop into the Blue division.

"Both doubles teams had the day off today (having received byes in the first round) and will pick up second round play tomorrow. Our US Team is unified and very positive as we enter the final four days of competition."

#### **A ROLLER COASTER DAY | WEDNESDAY**

In a very tough match to watch (who does one root for??), Rhonda and Aubrey went to a tiebreaker. It was Aubrey in the first game 15-11, Rhonda in the second by the same score, and Aubrey scored four in the 'breaker. Team Aubrey was on hand, cheering at maximum decibels, and at one point, Rhonda asked the crowd during a timeout, "Can I get a fan? I'll pay someone to cheer for me!" Indeed people started cheering, and she didn't even have to pay them. Rhonda knows how to work a crowd.

The rest of the day was easier... Coach Ellis summarized, "Teammates and roommates Rhonda and Aubrey played well today as they sadly met in the Round of 16 of the Gold category. Rhonda will take on Cristina Amaya of Colombia tomorrow while Aubrey will drop into the Blue division as the #1 seed and continue to earn points for the Team. Rocky and José had routine wins; both will play challenging quarterfinal matches tomorrow. Aimee and Janel were too much for the ladies from Catalonia, and Ben and Tom received a forfeit win as the Puerto Ricans decided to pass on the match. The gentlemen will have a tough match tomorrow against a solid Ecuadorian team. We're all hoping for positive outcomes in the quarterfinals."

#### **QUARTERFINALS | THURSDAY**

Another really excellent day for the US Team. Between Rhonda's match against a tough Cristina Amaya and the Men's Doubles marathon battle, the stress was at fever pitch.

Coach Ellis comments, "We are almost completely where we want to be at this point in the tournament. All USA players but one are in the gold division semifinals. Also, Aubrey had a nice victory over Carla Muñoz of Chile to advance to the semis in the Women's Blue category. Most exciting was Rhonda's victory over fellow LPRT pro, Colombian Cristina Amaya. Rhonda fought off three match points in the second game and then two more in the tiebreaker. The men's doubles was simply "ferocious" as Ben and Tom won in two tough games against a solid Ecuador team. As José dropped a match in the round robin competition, he and Rocky will meet in the semis at "high noon" tomorrow. The winner goes to the finals, and the loser gets a bronze medal."





### TEAM BABY MEETS HIS GRANDPARENTS

Hudson Croft (Team Baby) met his paternal grandparents for the first time in Burlington. Bob and Beth Croft arrived from Illinois with granddaughter Annabelle on Thursday, and they all took turns holding and cuddling Hudson throughout the day. Team USA members took advantage of "Hudson time" earlier this week, knowing full well that come Thursday, we wouldn't get hold of him anymore!

### U.S. RESIDENTS PLAYING FOR OTHER COUNTRIES

Some of you know these folks from your state and local tournaments in the U.S. Pretty cool that heritage allows for players to represent the countries they and/or their families came from. Here are the players who are US residents and representing other countries (including U.S. State of residence): Shai Manzuri, Argentina (Texas); Fernando Javier Rivera, Puerto Rico (Illinois); Michael Barrett, Puerto Rico (Florida); Alok Mehta, India (Illinois); Sumeet Kamat, India (California) Rajiv Vardrajan, India (Washington) Pratap Ballalasumudra, India (Texas).

### INTERNATIONAL RACQUETBALL DEVELOPMENT

helps ensure the future of our sport worldwide. Several well-known Americans were in Burlington coaching international players/countries: Cliff Swain – Argentina (Maria José Vargas), Fran Davis – Mexico (Paola Longoria), Tom Travers – Team Guatemala.

### LIVE STREAMING

John Scott endured a truly nightmarish day of travel to arrive around midnight Wednesday, and thanks to his perseverance, the IRF Network and eNetLive.tv were set up and ready to stream four semifinal matches on Friday. John Scott and Gary Mazaroff provided rally-by-rally commentary.

### SEMIFINALS HEAT UP THE COURTS | FRIDAY

Team USA continued to enjoy success today in four out of five matches. Bronze medals will be awarded to José Rojas, Ben Croft, and Tom Fuhrmann on Saturday. By end of day Saturday, each and every US Team member would be wearing a medal ... it's just that as of Friday, the color of some of those medals was yet to be determined!

Coach Dave Ellis stated that he was impressed with Rhonda's play in her win over Samantha Salas of Mexico. "Rhonda was just amazing today. A long-time Team USA player, Rhonda combined her awesome talent with high percentage racquetball. Aubrey's win in the blue category today gives her an opportunity for revenge over Maria Paz Muñoz for her loss in the seeding round. Rocky and José's match was a battle that could have gone either way. It's always tough to see two Team USA players having to play each other. Aimee and Janel started slowly in their second meeting with Ecuador, losing the first game 15-6. Again, Janel found her mojo and the girls coasted for the rest of the match. Aimee, as usual, made a lot of shots. Her nickname is not "Champ" for nothing. Ben and Tom ran into a couple of Canadians that played some exceptional doubles. Green and Gagnon fed our guys a steady diet of jam serves, good gets, and tough wide angles throughout the match. Ben and Tom's efforts resulted in a couple of bronze medals that will greatly add to our overall total. More medals coming tomorrow. We're in three gold division finals and one in the women's blue division."

### THE FINALS | SATURDAY

All Gold division finals matches on Saturday were streamed live on the IRF Network by John Scott and sidekick Gary Mazaroff.

It was exciting to hear that President Evo Morales of Bolivia was going to be tuning in to the Men's Singles final, and in fact, he requested that the match be made available to be broadcast live on Bolivian TV. John Scott and the IRF made it happen. Cool!





## THE FINALS ENDED UP THIS WAY...

**Rhonda Rajsich (USA) vs. Paola Longoria (Mexico), 6-15, 8-15**

**Aubrey Kirch (USA) vs. Maria Paz Muñoz (Ecuador), 14-15, 8-15 (Blue division)**

**Rocky Carson (USA) def. Conrado Moscoso (Bolivia), 15-3, 15-8**

**Aimee Ruiz/Janel Tisinger (USA) vs. Paola Longoria/Samantha Salas (Mexico), 4-15, 12-15**

Coach Dave Ellis had this to say: "Saturday was memorable with Rocky Carson winning a record-breaking fourth World Singles Championship. Rhonda, Aimee, and Janel ended with silver while Ben, José, and Tom took a bronze. Aubrey got the silver in the Women's Blue division. The entire US Team contributed to the defense of our World Championship title with each one earning significant points. I am so proud of the unity of this team after having watched them pull together for the last 11 days. There was mutual support throughout our time here in Burlington, and at our traditional team toast after the medals ceremony, all expressed positive feelings toward their teammates. As Coach, I'm grateful to all the players for their 100% effort at all times. My gratitude extends to our outstanding staff of RO Carson, Cheryl Kirk, and Brent Huff. The overall championship title still belongs to the United States of America. Every racquetball player in the USA can be proud."



**SAYING GOODBYE ...** The Saturday evening banquet was first class. A (relatively) small marching band and flag squad began the evening. Everyone enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner, presentations of thanks by Racquetball Canada to its staff and volunteers, the bestowing of gifts to the host country by a number of national federations (a tradition at each event), and then the music of a DJ for dancing the night away. The Japanese delegation wore their native kimonos and obis. The US Team and Team Ireland (who particularly hit it off throughout the week) continued their camaraderie and said their goodbyes at the end of the evening (whenever that actually was).



# PRE-WORLD THOUGHTS FROM **TEAM USA**

## **AUBREY KIRCH**

*"I have trained very hard this last year both physically and mentally, and now my priorities have shifted. I no longer am competing just for myself but also to be at my best for the team. I hope to be able to help Team USA bring home the Gold – there would be nothing better!"*

## **TOM FUHRMANN**

*"I'm excited to play at this level and represent the USA. This is a great honor at the tail end of my career, and I am enjoying being a part of a great team. I hope to represent myself and Team USA to the best of my ability."*

## **JANEL TISINGER**

*"I feel very blessed and honored to be here representing the team. I hope I can play my best and represent my country in an honorable way."*

## **BEN CROFT**

*"To say it's an honor to put on the red, white, and blue to represent the United States wouldn't do it justice. As I get older, I really appreciate the*

*things that I took for granted in my younger years. We are so lucky to live in the USA, and it's important to remember that the men and women who serve our country is a reason we have the opportunity to play in this event."*

## **AIMEE RUIZ**

*"This will be my fifth consecutive World Championships, and each time I compete and wear USA on my back it means even more than it did the first time. It's a huge honor for me and something I never take for granted."*

## **JOSÉ ROJAS**

*"This has been an awesome experience so far, a real honor. I'm eager to show the world what I'm made of while representing my country and my team."*

## **RHONDA RAJSICH**

*"It is truly an honor to wear USA on our backs and to compete for our country. So few athletes get the chance, and it is an unforgettable experience to share a single vision and goal with a Team*

*in an "individual" sport. It's pretty special when you hear the cheers and support from teammates who are usually your opponents for the other 99% of the season. We all bleed Red, White, and Blue together at these special events and give our all to represent the USA."*

## **ROCKY CARSON**

*"I have always considered it to not only be an honor but also a blessing to play for the U.S. Team. America is the best. It is also nice for me to be a part of a team in which we are all trying to win the gold, individually and collectively."*

## **US TEAM HEAD COACH DAVE ELLIS**

*"I consider it an honor to be representing the USA as National Team Coach. It's a privilege to be working with our country's athletes. I want to thank our staff members RO Carson, Cheryl Kirk and Brent Huff dedication to our Team. And, it was really cool having USA Racquetball Executive Director Steve*

*Czarnecki here with us during Opening Ceremonies."*

## **ASSISTANT COACH RO CARSON**

*"My wife is Rocky's and my biggest fan. We are a very close family, and both Dawn and Lauren have always been there for both Rocky and me."*

## **ATHLETIC TRAINER BRENT HUFF**

*"It's a privilege and an honor to make the trip with the U.S. Team again, an opportunity to work with the best racquetball athletes in the world and help out in a sport that's my passion and my hobby as well."*

## **TEAM LEADER CHERYL KIRK**

*"Being U.S. Team Leader is a pleasure and an honor. I enjoy ensuring things go well, removing extraneous logistical worries or concerns from the athletes' minds so they can go onto the court and do their best. I couldn't be prouder of our US Team members and staff for their skill and their heart both on and off the court."*



## **MEDALS CEREMONY AT THE CLUB**

After the Men's doubles final was played (Colombia defeated Canada), the Local Organizing Committee and young volunteers were on hand to assist with the giving of the medals, the bearing of country flags, and the playing of the national anthems of the winning Gold division individuals and countries.

## **FINAL STANDINGS BY COUNTRY**

Men's Team	Women's Team	Combined Overall Team
1. USA	1. Mexico	1. USA
2. Bolivia	2. USA	2. Mexico
3. Colombia	3. Ecuador	3. Bolivia
4. Canada	4. Argentina	4. Canada

*A full listing of individual and team results can be found on Wikipedia.*



# CALENDAR of EVENTS

For the latest in USA Racquetball Sanctioned Events visit [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com)

Date(s)	Event Name	City	State	Venue
Oct. 3-5	Countryside YMCA Charity Racquetball Tournament	Lebanon	OH	Countryside YMCA
Oct. 4-5	Tucson Open	Tucson	AZ	Tucson Racquet & Fitness Club
Oct. 8-11	Huntsman Senior Games	St. George	UT	Sports Village
Oct. 8-12	UnitedHealthcare US OPEN	Minneapolis	MN	Life Time Fitness - Target Center
Oct. 10-12	Adcope Fall Classic Season Kick-Off	Lewiston	ID	Adcope Athletic Club
Oct. 10-12	Louisiana State Doubles Racquetball Championships	Harahan	LA	Elmwood Fitness Center, Harahan
Oct. 11-12	Ghostly Doubles	San Antonio	TX	Gold's Gym HCV
Oct. 11-12	Missouri WOR State Doubles	Eureka	MO	Drewel Park
Oct. 17-19	Cross Court Open	Woodland	CA	Cross Court Athletic Club
Oct. 18	Sarasota 1-Day Shootout	Sarasota	FL	Sarasota YMCA
Oct. 18	HOPE for a Cure Breast Cancer Shootout	Lilburn	GA	Recreation Atl
Oct. 18-19	AZ WOR I Battle Assault on Pima	Tucson	AZ	Pima Community College
Oct. 18-19	Harry Tractman Invitational for Manna on Main Street	Chalfont	PA	Philadelphia Sports Club at Highpoint
Oct. 23-25	Men of October	Sun City West	AZ	Sun City West Raquetball
Oct. 24-26	Garnet and Gold Classic	Tallahassee	FL	FSU Leach Center
Oct. 30-Nov. 2	International Comes to Albuquerque, New Mexico	Albuquerque	NM	Midtown Sports And Wellnes
Nov. 6-9	Davison IRT Tier One Pro Stop	Davison	MI	Davison Athletic Club
Nov. 8	Texas Tech Open	Arlington	TX	Texas Tech University
Nov. 13-16	24th Annual Turkey Shootout	Garden City	KS	Garden City Family YMCA
Nov. 14-16	CNRA State Doubles Championships	TBD	CA	TBD
Nov. 15	Tri-State Open	Chalfont	PA	Philadelphia Sports Club at Highpoint
Nov. 21-23	Sarasota Fall Tournament	Sarasota	FL	Sarasota YMCA
Dec. 4-6	NMRA Doubles-Only Championships	Pleasanton	CA	ClubSport Pleasanton
Dec. 5-7	UNC Tar Heel Classic	Chapel Hill	NC	UNC-Chapel Hill
Dec. 6-7	Florida International Senior Games and State Champs	Sarasota	FL	Bath and Racquet
Dec. 6-7	RAM State Doubles Championship	Mt. Clemens	MI	Total Sports
Dec. 11-15	U.S. National Doubles Championships	Tempe	AZ	Arizona State University
Dec. 27	Junior Jingle One-Day Shootout	Chalfont	PA	Philadelphia Sports Club at Highpoint
Jan. 8-15	California Open	Fountain Valley	CA	Los Caballeros
Jan. 16-18	WSMRA National Championships	Fridley	MN	Life Time Fitness Moore Lake
Feb. 6-8	Florida State Singles	Sarasota	FL	Sarasota Bath & Racquet Club
Feb. 21	Icicle Open	Chalfont	PA	Philadelphia Sports Club at Highpoint
Feb. 28-Mar. 15	Meijer State Games of Michigan Winter Games	Grand Rapids	MI	Riverview

**COMPETITORS:** The USA Racquetball Board has approved that, effective September 1, 2014, the Limited Event Membership (LEM) price will return to \$20. Players who choose the one-time membership to compete in sanctioned events should note the upcharge and effective date.





## HALL of FAME



At its annual award banquet, USA Racquetball inducted three into the Hall of Fame. Pictured L-R above, Mike Zeitman, Jimmy Lowe, and Brian Hawkes were selected to receive the sport's highest honor.

**Brian Hawkes**, 50, of Lake Forest, Calif., is widely considered the most dominant outdoor player in the history of the sport, with more than 20 outdoor World and National Pro singles titles to his credit, the most recent coming in 2005 at the age of 41. Hawkes won the National Pro Outdoor singles title 20 times from 1981 to 2005, and the National Outdoor Doubles title 8 times. Indoors, Hawkes earned two stints on the U.S. National Racquetball Team in 1989 and 1990.

**Jimmy Lowe**, 50, of Aiea, Hawaii was introduced to the sport at the age of 15, then began playing regularly in 1982 when he began a career in the Army. A seven-time Army champion and six-time Armed Forces champ, Lowe's most numerous titles have come in National age divisions, with wins in 16 singles age groups, and 15 doubles age groups. He added an additional 10 U.S. Open age group titles from 2003-2010 and is a five-time winner of USAR's Bud Muehleisen Male Age Group Athlete of the Year award.

**Mike Zeitman**, 65, of Louisville, Kentucky started racquetball as a teen, quickly advancing into top amateur and pro ranks. His most meaningful contributions were tireless work and volunteerism in re-building the International Racquetball Association in its early years. Among the first full-time promoters, he ran tournaments and pro tours, published magazines, started junior programs and consulted for manufacturers - and is even credited with introducing the ceiling ball - setting a high bar high for today's volunteers.

Founded in 1973, the USA Racquetball Hall of Fame Player inductees are honored for excellence as Professional, Amateur Open, Amateur Age and/or Outdoor players. In total, 56 of the sport's greatest champions have been enshrined over the 40-year history of the Hall of Fame. Nominations for the Hall of Fame are considered annually - due no later than September 15 each year - and details are available at [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com).

### Contact

### Email

Andrew Kulback	amkulback@yahoo.com
Tom Cain	thomascain9@gmail.com
John Haynes	rbjohn175@gmail.com
Myles Hayes	championships@usra.org
Chuck Stivison	adcoperacquetball@gmail.com
Anthony Zeringue	anthonyz@cox.net
Venita Mitchell	venitamitchell@hotmail.com
Ryan Maher	andwhat19@gmail.com
Jack Hughes	hughesrjh34@gmail.com
Chad Bailey	auchad99@gmail.com
Tara Borrero	womensball@gmail.com
Darold Key	azor@azoutdoorracquetball.com
Daryl Rosidivito	djrosidivito@yahoo.com
Greg Steger	gmsteger22@gmail.com
Andrew Kapec	fsurball@gmail.com
Gary Mazaroff	gmampro@gmail.com
Weldon Blakeslee	dschopieray@newtechnologiesinc.com
Ty Stolp	taylor.mcclung@ttu.edu
Sarah Tighe	gckymca.fitness@gmail.com
Jack Hughes	racquetballplus@comcast.net
Daryl Rosidivito	tom@archwaypress.net
Chad Bailey	auchad99@hotmail.com
Cindy Tilbury	cindy.tilbury@att.net
Eric New	kashef@live.unc.edu
Jean Trimble	jtrimble1255@gmail.com
Twayne Howard	thoward@ProKennexUSA.com
Myles Hayes	championships@usra.org
Daryl Rosidivito	djrosidivito@yahoo.com
Randy Lam	rjlam@hotmail.com
John Wilinski	jwilinski@lifetimefitness.com
Chad Bailey	auchad99@gmail.com
Daryl Rosidivito	djrosidivito@yahoo.com
Twayne Howard	thoward@ProKennexUSA.com



# International Update

## Another Successful Worlds for IRF

Article & Photos by Cheryl Kirk

## WORLD CONGRESS UPDATE

The US Team Delegation wishes to deliver our gratitude to those who made the event so truly memorable. At each IRF Worlds, held biennially, the World Congress convenes where all countries in attendance are gathered to hear reports on the state of racquetball, the IRF and its regions and member federations. Below is a brief recap of decisions:

- Approval of Japan as a full member under the Japanese Racquetball Federation
- Approval of India as a full IRF member
- Approval of Denmark and Ukraine as developing members
- Yuni Cobb (USA) was elected Women's VP
- Jack McBride (Canada) was elected as North America Regional VP
- Estuardo Wer (Guatemala) was elected as Central American/Caribbean Regional VP
- Financial Reports (2013-2016) were presented by Rafael Fernandez

**RULE CHANGES //** The IRF Board of Directors met in April and recommended adoption of these two rule changes to the membership. The following changes were approved unanimously and went into effect on September 1, 2014.

1. Once players (singles) and teams (doubles) are summoned to a court for a designated match, use of proper eyewear and the racquet safety cord will be required. Failure to abide by this regulation will result in a

Referee Technical (deduction of 1 point).

Note: This includes all practice before and during a match.

2. The racquet, including grip, may not exceed 22 inches in length. Currently a 3/8" inch overhang of the grip is allowed. It is believed that a 22-inch racquet length should indeed be 22 inches and that there should be no further allowed specifications. By adopting this rule, the number of appeals and protests will be reduced and the somewhat subjective process during the match of measuring a 3/8" inch overhang will be eliminated.

**CONSTITUTION REVISIONS //** The Congress voted to commend Tim Baghurst for his work in fine-tuning the language, format, and professionalism of the IRF Constitution. These IRF Constitution changes were ratified by the membership.

### EVENT UPDATE

- The next major IRF event is the 2014 World Junior Championship in Cali, Colombia, October 19-25.
- The IRF Board of Directors will meet in Cali to decide upon the site of the 2016 IRF World Championships.
- The Pan American Racquetball Championships will take place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 28-April 4, 2015.
- The Pan American Games will be hosted by Toronto 2015 next July. Racquetball is a full medal sport in this competition.

The US Team Delegation wishes to thank everyone who made the World Championships so truly memorable:

- **Jonathan Clay** of Rollout Racquetball for being Official Apparel Sponsor for USA Racquetball and the US Team.
- **All the individuals who made contributions large and small** ... every bit counts! The Team USA Challenge on [usaracquetball.com](http://usaracquetball.com) provides the opportunity for racquetball players to support the TEAM USA with their participation at international competitions.
- **The Local Organizing Committee and Racquetball Canada** (*Adrian Webb & Company, Jack McBride, and Cheryl Adlard*) for putting on a fantastic event. The work behind the scenes to pull off a tournament of this magnitude is unbelievable. Everyone, and I mean everyone, was pitching in from staffing the players lounge, to driving shuttles, and everything in between.
- **The tournament staff** (*Osvaldo Maggi, Francisco Kurzbard, Gary Mazaroff, et al.*)
- **The referees** who came in from several countries and all over Canada to provide a top-notch experience to the players, including the happy gift that no player had to ref the next match!
- **John Scott** for bringing the semifinals and finals to nearly 10,000 viewers on the IRF Network.
- **The many volunteers and employees** who worked tirelessly in support of this event and its players, coaches, and delegates from the 21 countries in attendance.
- **The staff of the Burlington Holiday Inn and Convention Centre** who continually served us in the spirit of "Yes! Now, what's the question?"
- **The friendly staff of the Cedar Springs Health, Racquet & Sportsclub.**
- Last but not least, **Leo Vasquez** who stopped whatever else he might have been doing as soon as a blog and photos were ready for posting!
- **TEAM USA** extends their heartfelt gratitude for all the support via Facebook, Twitter, email, text messages, and telepathy.



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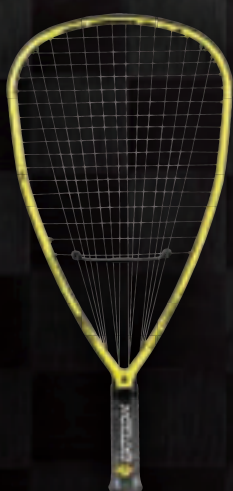
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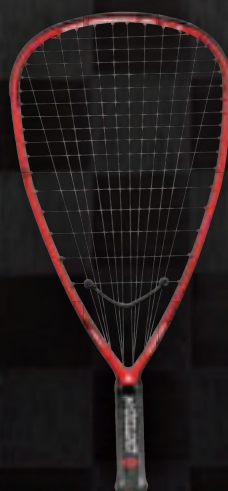
## EXO³ TORON 150 ESP

POWER LEVEL: 4800  
WEIGHT: 150g  
BALANCE: Head Heavy



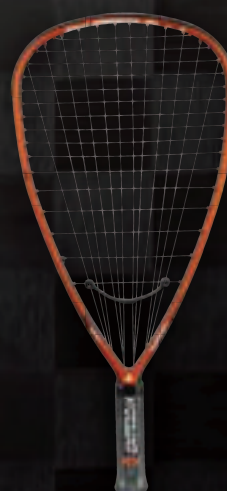
## EXO³ TORON 160

POWER LEVEL: 4700  
WEIGHT: 160g  
BALANCE: Even



## TORON PRO 170 ESP

POWER LEVEL: 4900  
WEIGHT: 170g  
BALANCE: Even



## TORON PRO 180 ESP

POWER LEVEL: 4900  
WEIGHT: 180g  
BALANCE: Even



## EXO³ RE-IGNITE

POWER LEVEL: 4400  
WEIGHT: 180g  
BALANCE: Even



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