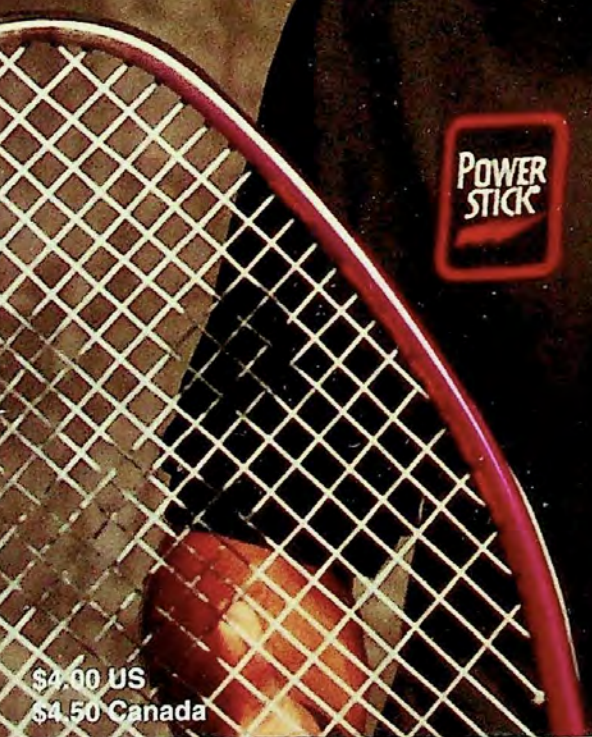


The Magazine of Professional Racquetball

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Spring 1994

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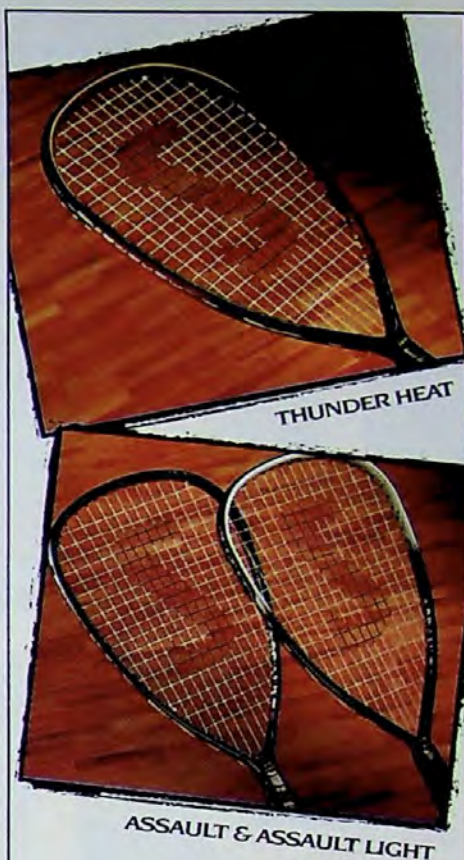
Losing Control

By Mike Ray

I am often asked "Why don't you play more of the power game?" Well, there are several answers but I think the most important one is "I can't." To say you are going to walk into a court and hit a racquetball 180 m.p.h. and being able to actually do it can be two totally different things. Then, to walk into the next match and your opponent is hitting every other shot 160+ and trying to match up power for power puts the weaker player (me) at a definite disadvantage. Just hitting the ball as hard as possible does not mean a player will hit a winning shot so some balance of power and control must be obtained.

I can hit with sufficient power in order to successfully execute any type of shot so I must make up for lack of overwhelming power with greater shot selection. Learning to hit and control more shots than my opponent still wins matches and winning is what counts in the pros. I believe that as a "control player" my game is generally more complete than some power players. Being able to change complete shot selection strategies allows ideal game plans for certain "one dimensional" players. This allows easy wins which are essential for winning tournaments that are physically grueling. Relying on one game plan for every player makes some matches tougher than necessary.

Another thing I find is that many courts have their own subtle differences with bounces, lighting, court hinders, or invisible side wall glasses. Being able to adjust to take advantage of these subtleties without losing any offense can be a great asset. Not having to rely on any one or two parts of my game has only created more queries for me as a 30-year-old racquetball pro. How many more seasons can I compete if I do not rely totally on youthful strength and speed? What shot do I hit next?



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Cover: Mike Guidry

He is one of the youngest players on the men's professional circuit but he's scattering the ranks of even the most seasoned veterans. A close up look at one of the top stars of the future by close friend and fellow IRT competitor, Aaron Katz. **Page 26 Mike Guidry: New on the Force** by Aaron Katz.



A sure sign of success in any sport is to have a product labeled with your signature. This first in a series of features takes a look at Mike Yellen and the Flex Racquet from the late '70's. **Page 30 The Names of the Game.**

One of the most influential forces in racquetball today, Jim Carson talks candidly about Lynn Adams, the state of racquetball today, and some of the players he has coached. **Page 42 Coach** by Marvin Quertermous.



SPEED KILLS.



There are two ways to play racquetball. Fast and way too fast.
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SHORT SERVES

Who Says Celebrities Don't Play Racquetball?

The WPRA's Grand Slam '94 tournament in Chalfont, Pennsylvania this past January featured some interesting competitors. Hey, Ron I think the fries are done.



Chances are you won't see this particular shot in any of the instructional videos or learn the proper technique at a training camp. But, just to be prepared in any situation, it probably couldn't hurt to have it in your arsenal.

Anyway, we caught Cliff Swain in Baltimore in a match with Andy Roberts making the best of his court positioning. Wonder if he rolled it out?

Now That's a Backhand



Stephanie Secrest



Can't Judge a Book by its Cover

Ruben Gonzalez seems to be slightly less than impressed with the cover subject of a recent issue of **KILLSHOT**. Andy Roberts, on the other hand, appears to be quite taken with the issue.

Norm Blum's Passing Shots

Sure Thing

A fun-loving couple sure knows how to make racquetball more interesting. "They both are equally bad when they play their weekly match left handed. Let's put it this way, the winner gets the top bunk," reports the club manager. "The husband told me 'If I win, I win and if I lose, I win.'"

Dedication Personified

We all heard how Abe Lincoln walked five miles to school and eventually became president. If 15-year-old Erin Frost becomes a champion, she will have a tale of her own to tell. Frost, who resides in Klamath Falls, Oregon desperately wanted to compete at the World Junior Championships in Jacksonville, Florida last December. Being in a small town, the air fare was beyond her budget, thus forcing her to take Amtrak. It took Erin 88 hours on the train to arrive in Jacksonville, where she stayed with the family of tournament director Mary Lyons. It wasn't a

smooth trip. The 15-year-old battled a bout with food poisoning and was unable to get any medication for a terrible cold.

The story of her saga ran in the local newspaper about how she was going to miss Christmas because she'd still be on the train. One of the club members, Martha LaFata, a TWA employee came to the rescue. LaFata gave up one of her employee vouchers and a few other people chipped in money, including the US Junior National Team and The Racquet Stringer.

Frost, who won a couple of medals in the consolation division, was able to stay in Jacksonville longer and received about 10 hours of lessons from Lyons, one of the nation's top teaching pros. "She reminds me of a young, uncoached, left-handed version of Michelle (Gould). She has the talent and we know she has the dedication," Lyons says.

Potpourri

Five-time national champ Mike Yellen has retired but might play in a couple of stops later this season... Rumor Dept: ESPN is interested in televising more racquetball events. The first broadcast went over quite well...Where are the young, up and coming female players?



The average age of the top male open players is early twenties, while the top female average is the thirties...On a personal note, my daughter, Rachel, just turned five and my wife and I will be having a child at the end of July.

L etters

I would like to take a few moments to address a number of issues that have recently come to mind. First off, congratulations on the latest edition of **KILLSHOT** magazine. Your winter issue was the finest effort to date and as a serious racquetball player I am thankful that we have a publication like **KILLSHOT** to keep us informed on the various goings-on in our sport.

I feel reader F. Owens from New Orleans is poorly informed regarding readers interests on the pro tour events and who is on top in the rankings. I find the articles on the pro tour events very entertaining and without them we wouldn't be able to keep up to date about our favorite players, great match-ups or future stops on the tournament trail. Please continue to cover the stops and you might consider adding round of 32 results as I find it interesting to see who might be on the horizon of professional racquetball and what local talent is trying to give the pros a run for their money.

Secondly, I am a bit tired of reading about Jeff Conine. I fully realize what a great season he had for the marlins and I congratulate him on his efforts, but when I read in *Sports Illustrated*, **KILLSHOT** and the AARA magazine that he could have been a top five pro player and is thinking about playing some pro events this winter, I can only laugh out loud. I for one would like to see him enter a few events to see how he would fair. I think many people don't realize the skill level, practice, persistence and determination it takes to reach the upper echelon of professional racquetball. I would bet my two Alusions that Conine couldn't total 10 points off Cliff Swain in a 3 game match. Thanks and keep up the good work.

T. Deigham
Painesville, Ohio

I think my postal carrier is a racquetball player. He or she has to be because your office promised twice that my issue with Andy Roberts would be mailed to me

soon. I became suspicious after you guys promised I would receive my magazine First Class. After a couple of days, I knew it had to be the postal service.

So I devised a great plan to fool the postal service and at the same time get my latest edition of **KILLSHOT**. I said to myself, "Self, there is a VCI Pro-Am in Dallas and I bet there will be free issues of **KILLSHOT** laying around."

I have to admit I saved some money by catching a ride to Dallas with some racquetball friends of mine. Also, I was very fortunate because my hotel was directly next to the health club which displayed the magazines (and tournament).

I really can't complain because my plan worked beautifully. I stayed in a beautiful \$60 a night room, which gave me the opportunity to wake up early and be the first in line for my **KILLSHOT**.

I really have to "pat" myself on the back, I really outsmarted the postal service this time. I bet that is why I got my newest edition on time this month. The postal employees were outsmarted by my acts of sheer will power.

Your Devoted Reader,
R. Hunter
Houston, Texas

So what are you trying to say?

Through some of your issues, I've used Steve Strandemo's instructional articles as part of the clinics & private lessons I teach at my local racquetball club.

I have also recommended his published books as excellent reading to any of my students who wish to really study the game. A couple of students have taken me up on the suggestion, trying to locate a copy of his book *Advanced Racquetball*. Our local bookstores claim they're out of print. My only recourse is to check with Steve, or could you give me an address where I could write to him? I appreciate your assistance. Also, congratulations on an excellent publication.

B. Fuchs
Shawnee, Kansas

Steve Strandemo can be reached at:
Strandemo Racquetball Academy
1710 Willowhaven Road
Encinitas, CA 92024.

I was reading the Winter issue of **KILLSHOT** and I had to respond to Fritz Owens' letter.

I have been playing racquetball for 15 years. I'm an Open/A player I have played in a lot of tournaments and I have seen a lot of great racquetball players. However, last year I attended my first men's pro stop in Atlanta and I was truly amazed. Watching the pros play was like seeing a whole new game of racquetball. They were awesome! Anyone who is interested in this sport should have the opportunity to see the pros play. Not only will you be amazed at the way they play but these pros also deserve some support from their fellow racquetball players. Over the years I have subscribed to every available racquetball magazine so I have been reading about a lot of these pros for years. It was very exciting to actually see them play. Don't think for a minute that we don't want to keep up with the pros through your magazine. Your magazine is great. Keep up the good work.

C. Beasley
Huntsville, Alabama

An Open Letter to VCI

John Horner
Robert Brooks
VCI

I just wanted to take a moment to let you know how much the RMA appreciates your support of the pro racquetball tour. I have watched the tour prosper in the '70's, fluctuate between stability and floundering in the '80's and turn things around in the early '90's...Thanks to your help and support.

Unfortunately I don't get to attend but a few pro stops per year, but those I attend are a class act!! With Hank Marcus' co-ordination and leadership and tournament directors such as Jay Sweren in Baltimore and Alan Turem in Atlanta you are in good hands. The tour is, and should continue to be, a boon to the sport of racquetball and a leading force in the industry.

Thank you again for your support of both the tour and the sport.

Doug Smith
Network Marketing
Roswell, Georgia

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Sometimes I Just Don't Get IT

"The only absolute knowledge attainable by man is that life is meaningless."

--Tolstoy

Took some flak over the cover of the last issue. Here's Tim Doyle leaning over tying his shoe and what do you think he is wearing? Don't cheat now, think about it. Seems we are guilty of the heinous crime of allowing Tim to be photographed wearing Oakley eye-guards. Problem is, they aren't AARA approved. Now, we are the first to promote safe eye protection and, believe it or not, are not really all that cavalier in our attitudes of what is the accepted form and structure of the game. But when it comes right down to it I don't think we're AARA approved either. So goes life.

We get lots of questions and are

called to task about lots of things, some deserved and some not. Probably the best is being held accountable for *National Racquetball* taking a powder with everybody's money a few years ago. Boy, did those guys make some enemies! We've taken some lumps because of that magazine's disappearance from subscribers and advertisers alike.

We really don't mind taking the flak. In fact stirring things up makes the game a whole lot more interesting. And we fully expect to be called to task when we make errors. I guess what is really disturbing, though, is how serious most of our accusers seem to take themselves.

"Even a genius gets the message after a while."

--Bugs Bunny

Yeah, yeah I know, "Life is short, play hard." But hey, lighten up. It's just a game.

--S.Q.

Speaking of errors: Last issue's *Home Court* erroneously reported Penn as the ball of the Diet Pepsi Super Series. It makes sense that Ektelon, the other sponsor to the series would be using its own ball. Penn is the official ball of Lisa Gaertner's Spalding Super Series also in the northeast and the Pennsylvania State Doubles. We had press releases on all three at the same time and evidently went brain dead and crossed up the information. Sorry.



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Ten Important Facts About Your Good Health

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

1. Know your ideal body weight and try to maintain it

Your body mass index is calculated by dividing your weight (in kilograms) by your height (in meters). The healthy body mass index for a female is 20-27 and for a male is 20-25.

Obesity increases the death rate from diabetes, gall bladder disease, heart disease, kidney disease, and breast and colon cancer. The caloric requirement of the male is 2,700 calories and a female is 2,000 in one day. Ideal body weight should be attained by striving for a 2 lb. weight loss or less per week in a gradual manner. It is best maintained by increasing exercise and modifying eating behavior.

2. Cardiac Risks

Your risk of heart disease is affected by your cholesterol, family history, cigarette consumption, diabetes, hypertension, and birth control pill use if you are over 35. A family history of heart disease in a brother, sister, or parent less than age 60, doubles one's risk of heart disease. Know those risk factors that you have and alter the ones which you can alter.

3. Cancer Risks

Everyone should know the seven warning signals for cancer which, in brief,

are: (1) a lump or thickening anywhere (2) a change in the size or color of a skin lesion (3) indigestion or trouble swallowing (4) a change in bowel or bladder habits (5) any unusual bleeding (6) hoarseness or cough which persists (7) any sores which fail to heal over a reasonable period of time.



Your diet affects the occurrence of cancers of the colon, breasts, rectum, and prostate, which account for 38% of total death rates. To reduce risks, avoid obesity (especially in females), decrease the total fat intake, increase fiber intake, take a supplement of vitamins which include Vitamin A & Vitamin C, drink alcohol only in moderation, and reduce the use of salt-cured meats. There is some evidence that increasing the intake of nutrients found in cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower, etc., is beneficial in this regard also.

4. Exercise

Adequate exercise reduces cardiovascular risk factors as well as weight and its effect on heart disease and cancer. Optimum exercise should be four to seven times per week for a minimum of twenty to thirty minutes each workout to attain a pulse rate of approximately 155 if you are in your 20's; 145 if you are in your 30's; 140 in your 40's; 130 in your 50's; and 120 in your 60's. For individuals over the age of 35, it is a good idea to get medical clearance before strenuous exercise.

5. Nutrition

An optimum diet is high in fiber, low in smoked and barbecued meats which contain carcinogens (cancer causing chemicals), fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. You should also strive to reduce the saturated fat, cholesterol, red meat, cheese, and baked goods in your diet. Angel Food cake is an excellent source for your sweet fix for the day. Emphasize fish and poultry (without the skin). Veal is also an acceptable meat. Saturated fats are those fats which are solid at room temperature and polyunsaturated fats are those that are liquid at room temperature. Saturated fat triggers the liver to make more cholesterol. The most important polyunsaturated fats are safflower, corn, and soybean oil which should be emphasized. Fried foods should

be avoided if possible. Grandma's advice to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables is good advice.

6. Know your numbers

Everyone should be aware of personal cholesterol level (it should be under 200), and LDL level (bad cholesterol). Know your blood pressure, which should be less than 140/90 with the number 90 being the most important one. Persistently elevated blood pressure readings should be treated. You should also know your blood sugar, resting heart rate, and triglycerides (non-cholesterol fats).

7. Avoid cigarettes, excessive stress, more than two drinks of alcohol per day, and excessive exposure to sunlight

For each cigarette that is smoked per day, the risk of lung cancer is increased by a factor of one. This means that a person smoking 20 cigarettes per day has a 20-times greater chance of dying with lung cancer than someone who does not smoke. For every four smokers you know, statistics show that one of these will die of lung cancer. These smokers also have a three to four times increased incidence of peptic ulcers and esophagus and oral cancer.

8. Medications and Vitamins

If you are on medications, make sure you take them regularly. Avoid megadoses of vitamins. In the future, fish oil capsules may be important to reduce cholesterol as well as possible future uses of selenium and every other day Aspirin to reduce heart disease.

9 Check-ups

Complete physical examination with blood work and advice regarding health issues should be done in men every two years up to age 40, and then yearly and in women every two years up to age 35 and then yearly. You should be screened for cancer and women should have regular examination of breasts and pap smears. Immunity to German measles should be determined for those women of childbearing age. Individuals with chronic disease of the lung, heart, kidney, or liver should have yearly flu vaccines as well as pneu-

monia vaccines. Women should have routine mammograms and practice monthly self-breast examination and men under the age of 35 should do self-testicle examination for testicle tumors. Laboratory stool examinations should be done to detect microscopic amounts of bleeding in individuals over the age of 40, or with a family history of colon cancer. Tetanus boosters should also be updated every five to ten years. Proctosigmoidoscopy examinations of the lower colon should be done periodically beginning at age 50. This screens the colon for growths.



10. Miscellaneous

These are various suggestions to maintaining good health. They include: (a) eat breakfast - studies show that people who eat breakfast tend to live longer and healthier lives (b) wear seat belts (c) know your doctor's emergency phone number (d) be married - married people, for various reasons, have a much lower incidence of death and disease (e) see a dentist twice yearly (f) if you have young children in the home have Ipecac syrup available to induce vomiting with your doctor's advice if poisons are ingested (g) reduce stress (h) drink caffeine only in moderation and eat salt only in moderation.

The concepts of health maintenance and preventive medicine have received a great deal of attention in recent years and the issues discussed above are presented to help you become better informed about your health maintenance which, in the long run, will result in fewer illnesses and a longer, healthier life.

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Winning Racquetball

Practice to Perfection

By Woody Clouse

We've all heard that old saying, practice makes perfect. We've all been led to believe that to become better, all we have to do is practice. (Leaving the interpretation of how to practice up to the individual.) From hearing this advice, one could assume that from just going out and playing "practice games" he'll get better. Although this seems like a simple formula, it is extremely vague and unfortunately misleading.

Three immediate problems arise. The first problem here is that a person can aimlessly play day after day and year after year making the same mistakes, never reaching anywhere near his true potential. It is the old "I can't get off this plateau" syndrome. The second problem is that the player never gets enough repetitions at one particular shot to create any "muscle memory" to improve technique and consistency. The third problem is the lack of focus on what area needs improvement.

You can see, then, that simply saying practice makes perfect is very misleading. The truth of the matter is that only perfect practice makes perfect. Understanding this key point is the first step in understanding how to get the highest level of improvement in the smallest amount of time.

Treat your practice sessions as you would treat a baby learning to walk. Use encouragement and support, but do not scold yourself for falling down. Simply pick the baby up and allow it to take a few more steps.

Six Key Points to Perfect Practice

1. Set pre-practice goals.
Example: Stay loose, keep feet moving
2. Write down exactly how you are going to achieve these goals.
Example: Number of shots hit and what shots to hit.

3. Do not exceed practice time over 75 minutes.

4. Hit enough repetitions in a row to feel comfortable with your stroke, groove, and/or, tempo.

5. Enjoy the time spent practicing, if not, don't practice.

6. Once you have completed your practice session, assess your progress.



Good Solo Drills

1. The Ceiling Ball Drill should be your first drill. It allows your arm and shoulder to warm up, helps you keep your eye on the ball, and instills the importance of "setting" your feet. Hit 15-30 down each line and another 15-30 cross court. Shoot for the ceiling just before the front wall, causing the ball (after the bounce) to drop as close to the back wall as possible without "kicking out".

2. The Drop and Hit Drill is the one that we all do when warming up on the court - when each player has his own ball. The idea of this drill is to let your body fall into a comfortable position on each of various shots. Your pace and feel for the ball will differ with each shot. Hit 10-20 down the line, 10-20 cross court and 10-20

pinch - forehand, then repeat with your back hand.

3. The Up and Back drill will help you stay through a ball, and help with proper footwork and early racquet preparation. Hit the ball down the line, let it go to the back wall, then hit it again after it comes off of the back wall. Hit 10-30 forehand then 10-30 backhand. Remember to keep the ball down the line.

4. The Back and Forth Drill will help your racquet speed, your return of serve, your footwork, your eye-hand coordination, and the consistency of your swing. Simply hit the ball back to yourself, then hit it a second time before it hits the back wall. If you can hit 10 balls in a row, you are doing great. Be patient with this drill, it's a tough one.

5. The Set-Up and Kill Drill will simulate taking advantage of your offensive opportunities. You lob the ball to yourself to receive offensive opportunity, and then put the ball away. I would not recommend hitting the ball lower than six inches off the floor on the front wall. (This should be done off the back wall as well.)

6. The Pinch Drill will help your ability to pinch the ball, to have proper foot movement, racquet preparation, and proper point of contact. Start by standing a few feet behind the hash marks (5 foot rule line), then hitting the ball into a side wall, so it rebounds off of the opposite wall, back into center court. Then hit the ball with the opposite stroke into the same wall that it came from, creating an ongoing diamond pattern.

7. The Short Hop Drill begins by lobbing the ball back to the hash marks, then stepping into the ball just after the ball has bounced. Remember to hit enough repetitions to improve your timing. Don't concern yourself with stepping into the hash mark since improving your timing is the key.

8. The Service Drill should be at least 1/4 of your practice time, and as much as 1/3. Simulate any serve that you want to improve, and repeat the serve until you are happy with the result.

9. The Cut-Off Drill will improve your ability to take the ball out of the air. Begin this drill standing in the center of the ser-

vice box then hit a straight angle or an around the wall ball. Hit the corner or keep the ball down the lines. Be repetitive with the angle you are practicing.

Good Partner Drills

1. The Ceiling Ball Drill will help your footwork, endurance, and opponent awareness. Start by hitting a ceiling ball and running to the 5 foot rule line, while your partner is hitting the return ceiling ball. The drill ends when a ceiling ball is missed. In playing a game to 15 you should benefit greatly.

2. The Pass Drill helps your reaction time and improves your ability to swing at a ball instead of pushing at it. Each player stands on the 5 foot rule line and tries to hit shots that pass the other player.

3. The Serve and Return Drill allows you to focus on specifics without worrying about winning or losing the rally. The server repeats a serve for the receiver's benefit in developing a strong return.

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Here are some quotes from well known players who assisted me in the evaluation of some of FORTEN's new products."

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Put a Little



in Your Practice

By Larry Heflin, USTPA Pro 1

It is a well accepted fact that to become the best you can be, at any sport, you have to practice. But, unfortunately, many people put in countless hours of practice that yield little improvement and much frustration. My advice to these people is to "put a little P.O.P. in their practice."

P.O.P. is an acronym that I use to describe three basic guidelines I recommend for setting up a practice program. P.O.P. stands for Philosophy - Organization - Periodization. Let's discuss these individually.



Philosophy

Webster's dictionary defines philosophy as an analysis of the concepts expressing fundamental beliefs. As it applies here, this means that you develop your own views on the important elements of a good

practice session. Here are a few of my views:

1. Less is sometimes better. A shorter session of good practice is better than a longer session of bad practice. Quality not quantity.

2. No guts, no glory. Many times practice is not fun but if you want to improve you just have to buckle down and do the work.

3. "The edge" - off court practice. Many times that edge that makes the difference between winning or losing comes from doing different activities away from the court.

- Crosstrain** by playing other sports that use skills that will carry over to your main sport.
- Develop a **conditioning** program that works specifically on those movements used on court.
- Read and **study**. It is invaluable to

spend some off court time reading what other people have written concerning your sport.



Organization

I can still remember one of my high school teachers telling our class, "Learn to plan, plan to learn." I have come to realize in the years since high school that this was truly great advice. In attempting to improve your practices there is no better way than developing a plan and applying it conscientiously. Here are a few helpful hints:

1. Goal setting.

As a geometry teacher for twenty years, I have spent a great deal of time trying to convince my students that in order to finish a geometrical proof,

they have to know where they are going when they start. The same is true when organizing a practice routine.

a. You should set **general goals** for yourself. These might be something about the total number of hours you want to spend practicing each week or month or maybe about the intensity level you want to maintain. You be the judge and set goals that are important to you.

b. Set more **specific goals** for each individual practice session. These could be as specific as hitting fifty lob serves or twenty backhand kills. Again, you decide according to your needs.

2. Keep a written log of your practices that might include:

Date and time of session
Individual goals for this session
Specific drills & time allotted for each
Afterthoughts about the session

3. Practice alone, spending the majority of time working on the fundamental strokes.

Try a one hour session practicing drives, z serves, and lob serves for twenty minutes. Spend ten minutes on a variety of forehand shots and

another ten minutes on backhands. This leaves another twenty minutes to practice ceiling balls, reflex shots, splats, etc.

4. Practice with a partner in match simulations.

Try practicing playing from behind. Give your partner a substantial lead in a game, then try to catch up. Next, turn it around so you get the lead and the goal of closing out your opponent. Other things you might try are playing a game using only one type of serve or only getting one serve per point. Use your imagination and you can devise all kinds of creative simulations. You can find more ideas for practicing with a partner in Woody Clouse's "Winning Racquetball" segment in this same issue.

5. For practice matches, always schedule a variety of opponents.

I firmly believe you should practice against players of lesser, equal, and greater ability. One of the biggest mistakes made in the learning process is not recognizing the value of playing weaker opponents. Nothing builds confidence more than winning easily. You should also practice against different styles of players. Play against power players, consistent players, left-handed players, etc. Variety is definitely the key to scheduling practice matches.



Periodization

Periodization is done by choosing those major events in which you are interested in performing well and planning your practices to lead up to these events. For example, if the most important event in which you are going to compete is your club championships then plan your training to peak the week prior to the start of the tournament. This will allow some light workouts and a couple of practice matches the last week. Don't forget to take the day off prior to the start of the tournament as this will help you be physically and mentally fresh for your first match. Also, take some time off after the completion of the tournament. Then you will be ready to start periodizing for your next event.

I am confident that if you take the time to put some P.O.P into your practices, you will immediately start reaping the benefits. So what are you waiting for?

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“We’re not worthy”

Baltimore VCI Challenge Cup Series Party On Swain

Consistently bringing top players from the Northeast, Baltimore, and particularly the Merritt Club, have become quite a center for incredible racquetball. Always ready with a first class event are the folks from JAM Sports that host the VCI event each year. This year being no exception, players and fans gathered in one of the top spectator clubs in the country for tremendous action.

In a major first round upset, local hero Jim Cascio eliminated the current amateur national champ, John Ellis. In the sixteens, Mike Ray held other plans, but not without one Cascio win and a pair of extended games. Dan Obremski and Dave Johnson looked particularly impressive in the sixteens as well. Woody Clouse captured a big win over Jack Newman by breaking up Newman's control game with searing drives.

Tim Doyle ignited in the quarters with a whopping nine ace serves against a frustrated Drew Kachtik. Obremski returned to the form that earned him two TransCoastal Tournament of Champions

victories for a near miss at Ray in five.

Suffering enough from a knee injury to display a noticeable limp midway through his match with Clouse, Andy Roberts looked as if he was ready to pack for the early flight home. When the time actually came to throw in the towel, Roberts instead got mad, got intense and did what seemed impossible. Not only did Roberts finish the match, but seized a big victory allowing Clouse a win in the first game alone.

The last match of the quarters saw Johnson fighting so intensely against the superhuman Cliff Swain that risking bodily harm in each rally became the norm. The risk caught up to the Kamikaze Johnson long before the payoff as one tumble knocked him right out of the match in the third game.

In the semis, Robert's then slightly rested knee was less of a factor against Ray as he aggressively shot

Dan Fowler played into the 16's in Baltimore and then into the quarters in Denver with a four game upset of Mike Ray.



Charlie Palek

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Mm, mmm, good. Roberts and Swain are playing so well that they are attracting some interesting groupies.

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Good Call Swain

Since V8 has been a sort of secret weapon of many of the pros for years, it seems a particularly fitting logo on the Tournament House's main court front wall. The same front wall receives a battering every fall from some of the hardest hitters in the game, as well as daily by some legendary greats.

Former top pro Rich Wagner welcomes one of the best draws of the year composed

Cliff Swain

11-4, 11-8, 5-11, 9-11, 11-9

Andy Roberts

SEMIS

Swain d. Doyle

11-6, 11-9, 11-5

Roberts d. Ray

11-8, 7-11, 11-3, 11-7

QUARTERS

Swain d. Johnson

11-1, 11-6, F

Doyle d. Kachtik

11-6, 11-9, 7-11, 11-0

Ray d. Obremski

11-6, 8-11, 11-2, 8-11, 11-6

Roberts d. Clouse

3-11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-4

SIXTEENS

Swain d. Fowler

11-7, 11-4, 11-3

Johnson d. Guidry

11-6, 9-11, 11-9, 11-6

Doyle d. Katz

11-7, 11-2, 11-6

Kachtik d. O'Neil

11-7, 11-7, 11-3

Ray d. Cascio

13-11, 8-11, 11-3, 14-12

Obremski d. Gonzalez

11-4, 11-7, 11-7

Clouse d. Newman

11-7, 11-3, 3-11, 11-0

Roberts d. Cole

13-11, 11-5, 11-6

Baltimore

kill after kill for the win over the big southpaw. Swain chalked up yet another victory over Kachtik in the top of the draw by never letting him gain any control.

The Swain - Roberts final is a classic match since both players can play smart and deceptively as well as blast. Both are tough and unyielding. Swain was last year's national champ while Roberts took last year's VCI Challenge cup. To borrow phrases from the early days of the sport when Marty Hogan ruled and Davey Bledsoe could not manage an overthrow, we may be witnessing the best of the best, and the best of the rest. Swain prevailed, and wrote the first scene in what may be a very repetitive screenplay.

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New 93

SEMIS

Swain d. Kachtik
11-6, 11-13, 11-4, 5-11, 11-9
Roberts d. Gonzalez
11-5, 5-11, 11-7, 11-6

Cliff Swain

11-4, 11-7, 3-11, 11-3
Andy Roberts

QUARTERS

Swain d. Harnett
11-2, 11-13, 11-7, 11-3
Kachtik d. Doyle
10-12, 11-3, 9-11, 11-4, 11-6
Gonzalez d. Ray
3-11, 11-6, 14-12, 3-11, 11-6
Roberts d. Newman
11-6, 11-2, 8-11, 11-3

SIXTEENS

Swain d. Vogel
11-4, 11-4, 11-4
Harnett d. Guidry
11-6, 11-6, 6-11, 11-9
Kachtik d. Karp
11-6, 11-4, 18-16
Doyle d. Jelso
11-7, 11-0, 11-5
Ray d. Lerner
7-11, 11-2, 11-4, 11-4
Gonzalez d. Johnson
14-12, 11-5, 11-3
Newman d. Clouse
13-11, 8-11, 11-13, 13-11, 11-7
Roberts d. Engle
11-2, 11-4, 11-5

Riverside

of all the IRT greats, and plenty of surprises.

Hometown players Adam Karp and Steve Lerner each claimed first round victories over Mike Ceresia and Californian Michael Bronfeld respectively. Karp showed great promise in the event and continued to look tough in the next round as well against Kachtik. Lerner is one of those players that is simply far better than can be determined by the credit he receives. The prevailing thinking is that the veteran Lerner would be a major threat to the top spots if he played more of the IRT.

In the sixteens, the building Newman - Clouse rivalry escalated in intensity for five furious games. Newman barely eased past Clouse in the first extended game, then fell behind in the count with near misses in games two and three. Newman held on through a Clouse match point in the fourth to turn the tide for a surprise win in the third extended game of the match. In game five, Newman stayed cool and in control as Clouse's would-be kills stayed

ing five. In the "most wanted" match, Roberts dispatched Newman with trouble only in the fourth.

As before with Newman, Roberts only permitted Gonzalez any momentum in one game. At the top of the draw, Kachtik looked like he was ready for the upset while serving at five - two in the fifth. A series of four straight questionable calls that went in Swain's favor left Kachtik in disbelief and the crowd in hysteria.

up long enough for him to convert them into very effective passes and pinches.

In the same round, Bret Harnett allowed a smoking Guidry only one game victory on his own trip to the quarters. Each of the other top seeds advanced without difficulty.

The quarters provided four great matches. Swain simply outplayed Harnett, never allowing him his famous flat rolls. Kachtik blazed past Doyle's assortment of missiles in his usual scrappy style. Gonzalez avenged his loss in the final of the VCI event in Montreal to doubles partner Ray in an excit-

Having just implemented a trial "no linesman / no appeals" system in the IRT, Kachtik found himself at the mercy of a single official. Kachtik stayed frustrated but good-natured. The crowd became a lynch mob. The official made a hasty retreat at the conclusion of the match. Swain won eleven - nine in the fifth.

In the final, Swain furthered his absolute domination of the IRT. Roberts just widened the gap between himself and the number three man, leaving Swain as the only obstacle on his way to the top.

Denver Coca Cola Holiday ProAm Swain Rules... Dude

In its first visit to Denver, the IRT converged on the Lakewood Athletic Club with that special intensity reserved for men on a mission. The mission in Denver was to overthrow Swain. Mary Ann Alonzi and crew gave them just such an opportunity.

One of the biggest factors in the play in Denver was the pro players' being unac-

Cliff Swain

11-8, 11-4, 11-5
Mike Guidry

SEMIS

Swain d. Doyle
11-3, 11-8, 11-8
Guidry d. Kachtik
11-7, 9-11, 11-4, 8-11, 11-9

QUARTERS

Swain d. Clouse
12-10, 11-3, 11-8
Doyle d. Fowler
11-5, 11-5, 11-6
Kachtik d. Gonzalez
4-11, 11-7, 11-4, 11-2
Guidry d. Roberts
11-3, 11-9, 1-11, 11-4

SIXTEENS

Swain d. Bronfeld
11-1, 11-1, 11-1
Clouse
Forfeit from 32's
Doyle d. Ellis
11-7, 12-10, 11-1
Fowler d. Ray
5-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-9
Kachtik d. Vogel
4-11, 12-10, 9-11, 11-7, 11-7
Gonzalez d. Harrippersad
10-12, 11-4, 11-9, 11-4
Guidry d. Ceresia
11-1, 11-5, 11-8
Roberts d. Engle
11-0, 11-2, 11-6

Denver



Drew Kachtik has been bitten by the quarters demon lately but he looked more like the Kachtik of '92 playing into the finals before a home state audience in Dallas.

customed to the demands of playing at such extreme altitudes. One up and coming pro, Dan Fowler seemed to thrive on the "thin air" of the mile-high city. He made one of the most impressive showings of the first round in eliminating the tough local hero Bobby Rodriguez. Next, in the sixteens, he amazed the crowd by dismissing a stunned Ray.

Kachtik nearly found the same fate in the sixteens at the hands of a sharp Louis Vogel. The often underrated and now much improved Vogel was unable to close the deal as Kachtik fought savagely out of a one game deficit and Vogel lead in the second. Kachtik's tenacity prevailed but not without a good scare for the leather-tough Texan.

In the quarters, Kachtik found less trouble from his arch nemesis, Gonzalez. Swain dispatched Clouse with little hoopla. Guidry was merciless as he trashed Roberts by re-killng seemingly impossible gets. The big news of the round again came from the Northeast as Fowler claimed another victim in Doyle for his most impressive pro stop finish ever.

Swain ended Fowler's run in the semis with a constant barrage of missiles and good head and body fakes. Guidry totally surprised a confident Kachtik as he went for broke to capture a huge upset in five close ones.

Swain's fury in the final against Guidry proved what many pros have most feared. That is, if you beat Swain, you'd

better be loaded for bear the next time you face him. Avenging his surprise demise at Guidry's hands in October in Chicago, Swain was ruthless for three quick devastating games. The win in Denver not only

marked Swain's gazillionth win of the season, but also a romp through the entire draw without so much a dropping one game. Final analysis, "Swain rules".

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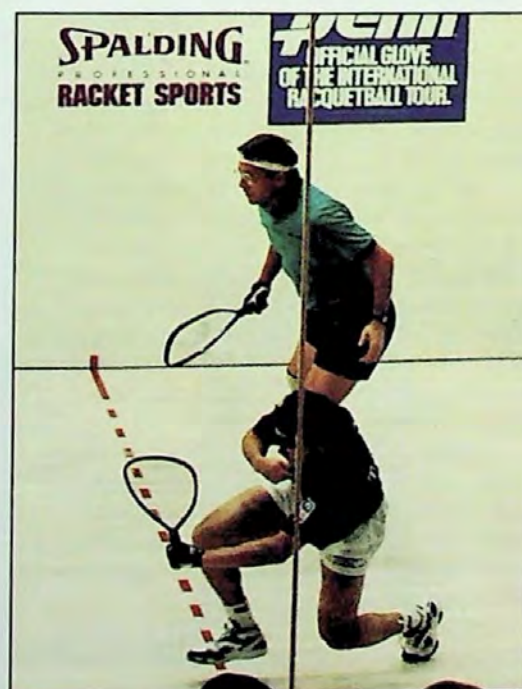
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Opposite: Cliff Swain continues to dominate the IRT with four consecutive wins. Two of those finals were against Andy Roberts who holds tight to the number two spot. Their matches always provide up close action.

Dallas VCI Challenge Cup Series Welcome to My Swain-cave

One of the most glamorous sites on the IRT, North Dallas' Landmark Club is housed in the plush comforts of the North Dallas Sheraton. Home club for IRT pro Aaron Katz, the exclusive facility delivered (by private elevator) the nation's top players to another shot at the VCI cup.

As the thirty-twos opened in Dallas, the only upset of the round visited the tournament host and Texas racquetball icon Katz. Memphis State University's up and coming Scott Reiff sent Katz back to the tournament desk early with a big four game win. Vogel, still hot from a good showing in Denver, dispatched Roger Harripersad in a close, smart four games.

Both, however, found stoppers in the next round against Ray and Roberts. Swain once again dispatched Ellis in three. Doyle eliminated Texas shooter Todd O'Neil. Obremski continued his run back through the rankings with impressive blistering passes to defeat the flying Gonzalez. Guidry showed a remarkable new talent for taking control of a match as he surprised Johnson. Kachtik also kept home fans hopes alive by knocking out former Canadian champ, Ceresia.

The best match of the round came from the building rivalry between Clouse and Newman. The first game could have gone either way with both players struggling to control the pace. By the fourth game, tied at two each, it seemed the key was as simple as who could best lay the ball down. While Clouse looked in control and ready to conquer, Newman found his stride and rode the momentum of some unusually fast shooting for the win. As the seasoned IRT spectator might guess, Mr. Clouse's reaction lacked only the orchestra in being the year's premiere pyrotechnic display.

Deliverin' the Doughnuts



Clouse 11, Newman 0 Baltimore 16's
Doyle 11, Jelso 0 Riverside 16's

Doyle 11, Kachtik 0 Baltimore quarters
Roberts 11, Engle 0 Denver 16's

SEMIS

Swain d. Doyle
11-4, 11-9, 11-5
Kachtik d. Guidry
11-9, 11-7, 11-2

SIXTEENS

Swain d. Ellis
12-10, 11-4, 11-3
Newman d. Clouse
12-10, 4-11, 11-5, 1-11, 11-8
Ray d. Reiff
11-8, 11-6, 7-11, 11-8
Doyle d. O'Neil
11-8, 11-8, 11-1
Kachtik d. Ceresia
11-9, 7-11, 11-9, 11-2
Obremski d. Gonzalez
9-11, 11-6, 11-1, 11-5
Guidry d. Johnson
11-3, 11-8, 11-4
Roberts d. Vogel
11-2, 11-4, 11-7

Cliff Swain

11-5, 11-6, 11-4

Drew Kachtik

QUARTERS

Swain d. Newman
11-4, 11-1, 11-5
Doyle d. Ray
11-13, 11-9, 4-11, 11-7, 11-2
Kachtik d. Obremski
9-11, 11-3, 12-10, 8-11, 11-2
Guidry d. Roberts
11-8, 10-12, 12-10, 11-8

Dallas

The quarters again provided some solid racquetball as Kachtik and Obremski reminded everybody why they had been so exciting to see in matches in previous years. Doyle shot pass after pass to keep Ray off balance and away from his killer forehand. Swain indicated that he had little time to spend on the courts for the quarters as he crushed a less-than-top-form Newman. Guidry furthered his reputation as a giant killer by sending home Roberts in four.

Kachtik found revenge from Denver on Guidry, while Swain grabbed both the semis and the final without one game defeat. The obvious challenge to would-be statisticians out there is to come up with the last time a pro went through two tournaments without so much as losing one game.

Swain has stretched his lead now to the point that he would almost have to be unconscious to be dethroned. Is he as good as he seems to be? Is he the best ever with the big sticks? Is he the best ever - period? Is he really such a "Bad Influence"? Stay tuned.

VCI Spreadsheet

IRT

1. Cliff Swain (1)
Braintree, Massachusetts
2. Andy Roberts (2)
Memphis, Tennessee
3. Drew Kachtik (4)
Dallas, Texas
4. Tim Doyle (5)
Huntington Beach, California
5. Mike Ray (3)
Hilton Head, South Carolina
6. Mike Guidry (9)
Dallas, Texas
7. Ruben Gonzalez (6)
Staten Island, New York
8. Jack Newman (7)
Hoffman Estates, Illinois
9. Bret Hamett (8)
Las Vegas, Nevada
10. Woody Clouse (11)
Jacksonville, Florida
11. Dan Obremski (12)
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
12. Dave Johnson (10)
Huntington Beach, California
13. Egan Inoue (14)
Honolulu, Hawaii
14. Aaron Katz (13)
Dallas, Texas
15. Mike Ceresia (15)
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
16. John Ellis
Stockton, California

WPRA

1. Michelle Gould (1)
Boise, Idaho
2. Marci Drexler (2)
San Diego, California
3. Robin Levine (12)
Sacramento, California
4. Cheryl Gudinas (14)
Lisle, Illinois
5. Lynne Coburn (5)
Baltimore, Maryland
- 6T. Laura Fenton (13)
Lincoln, Nebraska
- 6T. Molly O'Brien (7T)
Souderton, Pennsylvania
8. Ellen Crawford (11)
Minoa, New York
9. Chris Evon (9)
San Diego, California
10. Kim Machiran
Ballwin, Missouri
11. Roz Olson
New Paltz, New York
- 12T. Lorraine Galloway
Jamaica Estates, New York
- 12T. Marcy Lynch
North Wales, Pennsylvania
- 12T. Janet Myers
Charlotte, North Carolina
15. Karen Key
San Clemente, California
16. Malia Bailey (3)
Norfolk, Virginia

TransCoastal IRT rankings provided by World Racquet Sports Association

VCI Challenge Cup Series

1. Cliff Swain
2. Andy Roberts
3. Mike Ray
4. Tim Doyle
5. Drew Kachtik
- 6T. Mike Guidry
- 6T. Ruben Gonzalez
8. Dan Obremski

American Amateur Racquetball Association

- D
1. Mike Walsh
 2. David Kersten
 3. Rhett Collins
 4. Dan Ames
 5. Jordan Fought
-
1. Erin Burns
 2. Teresa Plaza
 3. Bobbie Ross
 4. Virginia Corcoran
 5. Jen Mayadas

Racquetball Canada

1. Sherman Greenfeld
 2. Simon Roy
 3. Mike Ceresia
 4. Haydn Jones
 5. Doug McQuarrie
-
1. Carol McFetridge
 2. Sue McTaggart
 3. Josee Grandmaitre
 4. Vicki (Brown) Shanks
 5. Linda Ellerington

Pennsylvania Racquetball Association

- Open
1. Rob McKinney
 2. Brian Jorgenson
 3. Travis Aldinger
 4. Chris George
 5. John Barrett
-
1. Molly O'Brien
 2. Mary Bickley
 3. Cindy Baxter
 4. Karin Sobotta
 5. Judy Flis
-
- 35+
1. Mitch Smith
 2. Jim Young
 3. Gene Rodgers
 4. Ed Garabedian
 5. John Greer
-
1. Paula McDermott
 2. Sally McFarland
 3. Debby Brooks
 4. Ann Bretthaupt
 5. Clare Jurista

The Winter issue was scheduled to run the PRA rankings. The Pennsylvania Racquetball Association could not provide the information and the listings were received from the AARA after publication deadline. The Ohio Racquetball Association was kind enough to provide their rankings as we went to press and we neglected to remove the Pennsylvania heading from that listing. We apologize to the ORA for the error and offer thanks to the AARA for providing the PRA listings.



Mike Guidry

New on the Force

By Aaron Katz

When I was first approached about writing an article about Mike Guidry for **KILLSHOT**, I had mixed emotions. Having known Mike and his family for seven years, I have developed a close relationship that has ranged from competitor, coach, friend, and, at times, older brother. However, after giving it some thought, I decided that having seen him grow from a shy teenager to a confident touring pro on the verge of breaking into the top four in the world, I should be the one to undertake the challenge of telling the early chapters of his racquetball story.

Few players have persevered throughout their playing careers as Mike Guidry has. The youngest player on the tour, Guidry has sacrificed much to become the best he can in an era where few players have done so. The most recent generation of racquetball players has seemed to shy away from the challenge of the men's professional International Racquetball Tour, despite its tremendous growth under the direction of commissioner Hank Marcus. Instead, many of them seem

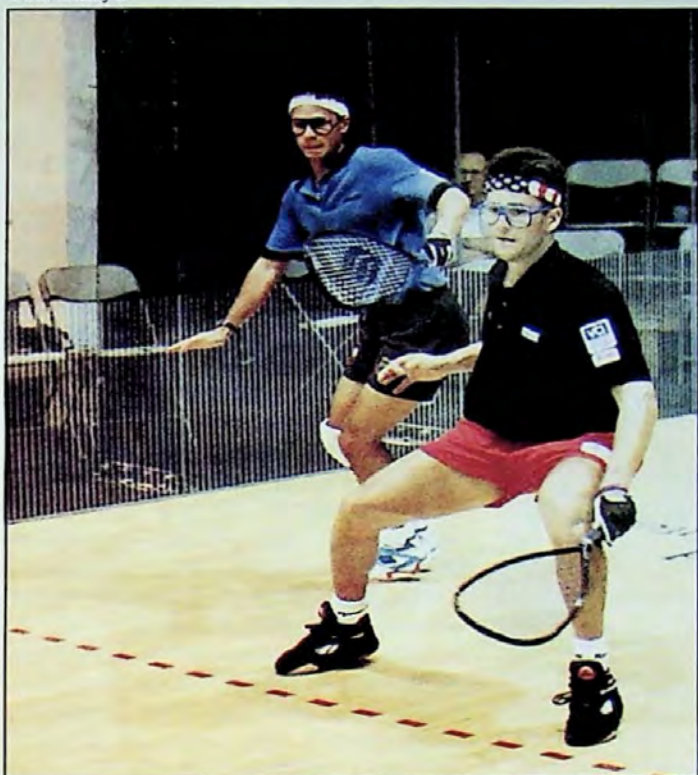


content to be "the big fish in a little sea". That is, they focus their energy and often immense talent on the amateur game and local money tournaments where the recognition comes quicker and the pain of losing less frequently.

Much to Guidry's credit he has put himself on the firing line devoting all his attention to racquetball and the dividends of his years of commitment are starting to pay off. He is no stranger to having to work hard for his success. National titles come easy for some as they are blessed with tremendous ability. While Guidry does possess such talent, winning was a long and often tumultuous path for him, but one with pay-offs at every level of competition.

He began playing at the age of twelve in the small west Texas oil town of Odessa. There, every red blooded young man grows up dreaming of scoring touchdowns for the Odessa Permian Panthers, not dethroning Marty Hogan or Mike Yellen. Guidry attended his first Jr. National tournament in 1983 in Fishkill, New York, where he was unceremoniously ousted in the first round. It was not until 1988 in Denver that Mike won his first Junior National Singles title in the 18 and under division. He proved it was no fluke the following year when he became the first and only player ever in AARA history to claim two consecutive 18 and under titles. Guidry completed his

Paul Sancya



Charlie Palek



Above and below a picture of intensity, Guidry battles IRT #1 Cliff Swain last fall in New Orleans. Upper right: on the court. Lower right: Guidry signed with E-FORCE this past year and joined the ranks of Egan Inoue, Dan Obremski, Tim Doyle, and Woody Clouse.





Left: The Best of Texas. Aaron Katz, Drew Kachtik, and Mike Guidry attempt a little cut throat.

dominance over his competitors by capping off his junior career with a victory in

the Junior World Championships in Florida.

Having finished a banner junior career, Guidry was faced with the decision of every top young athlete - pursue his education or his passion of being the best racquetball player in the world. Being a top student in high school he understood the effort it took to succeed in academics as well as athletics. Guidry decided to attend the University of Texas at Arlington. Here, in the Dallas area, he would find access to one of the strongest club and tournament markets in the country. After a couple of years of leading a "dual" life of student/racquetball professional, Guidry decided to set his goals high and focus on making the most of his considerable talent and commit to the tour full time.

His first full year on the tour he had some good wins over top ten players as well as some near misses. He finished the season at #12. Many expected Guidry's next year (1992-93) to be his breakthrough year, however he rode a roller coaster



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most of the season reaching only one semi-final. After several disappointing losses he moved up only two spots to #10 by season end. It was at the end of this season that Guidry decided it was time to start putting some deadlines on his goals. He decided that if he could not break into the top six the following season, he would abandon his pursuit of being #1 and return to school to pursue his career goals in physical therapy.

Spurred on by new sponsorships from E-FORCE and Power Stick deodorant, Guidry started to take his profession more seriously. He increased his already intense training program to include at least four to six training hours per day with a variety of on and off court drills. As he put it, "There is never any excuse for losing a match because of fitness."

As a result, Guidry has put together his most consistent six months of play in his career. His four semifinals and one final in the first ten tournaments are evidence of the benefit of his diligent practice. He has had three wins over #2 ranked Andy Roberts, two wins over #3 ranked Drew Kachtik, and is currently the last player to have defeated #1 ranked Cliff Swain, the

most dominant player on the men's tour in over a decade.

Currently in the #6 spot on the IRT, Mike credits much of his improvement to his commitment to fitness, especially weight training. According to Guidry, "Putting on about five pounds of muscle has not only given me more strength during a match and on individual shots, but it has really increased my endurance throughout

He decided that if he could not break into the top six the following season, he would abandon his pursuit of being #1 and return to school to pursue his career goals in physical therapy.

the course of a four-day tournament and back to back tournaments. I think the expanded tour schedule favors the most physically and mentally fit because having to play week after week is a tremendous

drain on the body and mind."

Guidry is not satisfied with his current ranking. While he concedes that Swain has virtually wrapped up the #1 ranking for this season, he sees the #2 spot as being wide open. "As we get towards the latter part of the season and some of those 16's I had last year drop off the rankings I think I should be right in the running for #2," calculates Guidry. When asked about future goals he made them very clear. "I want to be #1, that's why I continue to play this game and work as hard as I do. A lot of players think Cliff is unbeatable. I look at it as that he is setting the standard that I'm going to have to live up to. I think having Cliff back is the best thing for my game because I'm going to continue to strive to reach that level."

As someone who has known Guidry for many years I personally would not want to bet against him reaching the #1 ranking, as he works on his serve and consistency his game should jump to the next level. He is already the quickest and most fit player on the tour. With a couple of more years of maturity under his belt you might be reading about how Guidry has set the standard for other pro players to reach.



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In those days, Yellen was a bright new star. He had come from obscurity to challenge the top pros the previous season, and suddenly found himself with a near-miss against Charlie Brumfield in the semis of the nationals. The sponsor saw talent, the playing public saw a hero. Later, Yellen would go on to claim five consecutive national championships from 1983 through 1987, then stage a comeback in 1992 that allowed him to retire at a very familiar number one professional ranking. Yellen was the master of the control rally. His sixth sense and precision shooting made him the perfect symbol of the new flex design.

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Mike Yellen with the Flex Racquet, 1979.

Mike Yellen

Flex Racquet



Mike Yellen in 1992.

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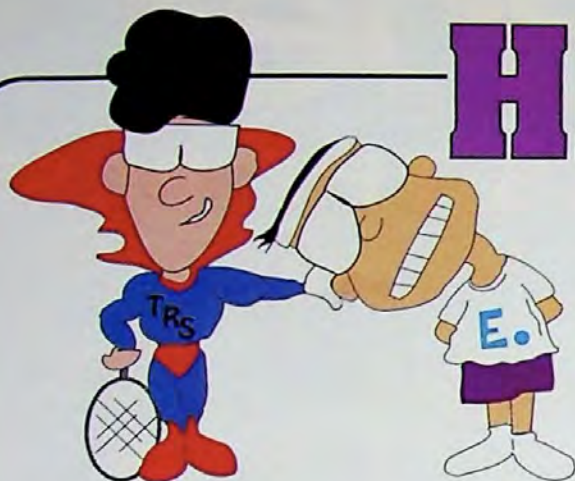
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HEAD *to* HEAD

Cliff Swain
vs.
Mike Guidry

Mid Season
Standings
'93-'94
Swain 3, Guidry 1

New Orleans
August 1993
Swain d. Guidry
11-7, 11-3, 11-7

Montreal
October 1993
Swain d. Guidry
8-11, 11-8, 11-4, 11-2

Chicago
October 1993
Guidry d. Swain
8-11, 11-8, 11-4, 11-2

Denver
November 1993
Swain d. Guidry
11-6, 11-4, 11-5

The best of the best and the best of the next, these two southpaws turn a pro match into a flying circus.

Cliff Swain

- devastating with any game style
- very deceptive
- total confidence
- dominating

Mike Guidry

- amazing court coverage
- precise placement
- brightest star of the next generation
- improving daily

New Official Grip ... From an Old Friend!

IRT commissioner Hank Marcus recently announced the players of the pro tour are endorsing the new Python Grip. According to Marcus, "The tour is always cautious about endorsing a new product, but the Python has been welcomed overwhelmingly." A product of Network Marketing of Roswell, Georgia, the new Python claims to be thinner, more durable, and "locks in" your grip better than previous grips. The IRT pros agree. Doug Smith, of Network Marketing has assured the racquetball public of the same quality and customer service with the Python as with past Network Marketing products.

What's a Toltec?

At each IRT pro stop the question keeps arising. **KILLSHOT** asked Steve Lyles of the Los Angeles based sportswear company that is now the official sportswear of the IRT just what it means. "The Toltecs were an ancient group of Indians that lived in what is now the Southwest United States, Central and South America," replied Lyles. "They were conquerors, the baddest of the bad. The Toltecs were fierce warriors who knew no fear and no defeat. In introducing a line of sportswear for racquetball, we wanted to bring across that philosophy. Racquetball is highly competitive and attracts the warrior spirit of those that play. The Toltecs were the ultimate warriors, anyone demanding anything less of himself has no business playing the game!" The bold new line brings radical colors and astounding art work.

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Penn Glove Bonus Pool

1. Cliff Swain
2. Mike Guidry
3. Tim Doyle
- 4T. Woody Clouse
- 4T. Dave Johnson
6. Louis Vogel
7. Roger Harripersad

BI RAK IT

Standings

1. Woody Clouse
2. John Ellis
3. Mike Brady
4. Drew Kachtik
5. Mike Ray
6. Aaron Katz
7. Sudsy Monchick



Head Anatom Bonus Pool

1. Mike Ray
2. Mike Guidry
3. Woody Clouse
- 4T. Dave Johnson
- 4T. Dan Obremski
- 6T. Dan Fowler
- 6T. Bret Harnett
8. Louis Vogel

TOLTEC

Toltec Sportswear Bonus Pool

1. Cliff Swain
2. Andy Roberts
3. Drew Kachtik
4. Mike Ray
5. Mike Guidry
- 6T. Jack Newman
- 6T. Dave Johnson

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2. Dave Johnson 154 mph
3. Woody Clouse 149 mph
4. Mike Guidry 147 mph
5. Mike Brady 144 mph
6. Mike Engel 142 mph
7. Mike Ray 136 mph



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Aggressive Serve Returns

By Jack Newman

The biggest single difference between the top amateur players and the touring professionals is the ability to defuse an opponent's serve. The pros know that they must stay aggressive on the service return to have any chance of winning the match. At any level, you can probably improve your game tremendously by developing the skills necessary to acquire control of the rally right from the service return. Adopting a more aggressive attitude is just the beginning. Experience and practice are

always the most important components. When facing a tough lob serve, however, some understanding of the pro's techniques and strategies for short-hopping and fly-killing may make all the difference.

The goal on the service is always to force a defensive (weak) or badly executed return. Hit correctly, a lob serve can accomplish this by reeking havoc with the receiver's timing. My goal against the lob serve is to reverse the roles by hitting a return that forces the server out of center

court (and into a weak third shot). While a ceiling ball may move the server out of the center, it does not create an offensive situation that denies the server a comfortable rhythm. I want you to be able to successfully attack the lob serve using the short-hop (moving up to attack immediately after the serve bounces) or fly-kill (attacking the serve before the bounce).

In order to hit these shots correctly, you must have a solid understanding of the rules regarding the serve and the five foot

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Portland, OR	Jan. 15 - 16	Newman/Gonzalez	Colma, CA	Apr. 9 - 10	Newman/Adams
Atlanta, GA	Feb. 12 - 13	Gonzalez/Roberts	Houston, TX	Apr. 9 - 10	Gonzalez/Roberts
Norfolk, VA	Feb. 12 - 13	Newman/Adams	Ann Arbor, MI	Apr. 23 - 24	Newman/Gonzalez
Denver, CO	Feb. 26 - 27	Newman/Roberts	Manchester, N.H.	Apr. 30 - May 1	Newman/Roberts

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zone. Sometimes confusing and often misunderstood, these rules can usually be made clear with this brief explanation. To

To attack the serve on the fly, the receiver must keep all parts of his body and racquet from breaking the vertical plane of the five line until after striking the ball.

attack the serve on the fly, the receiver must keep all parts of his body and racquet from breaking the vertical plane of the five line until after striking the ball. Only the follow-through may break the plane in this instance. To return the serve on the short bounce, the receiver may ignore the five foot zone once the ball has bounced.

Violating these rules is very costly since it affords the server automatic points.

The strategy behind both of these aggressive returns is to get the server out of center court, deny him a comfortable third shot, and keep him from being in front. Shoot for good angles on passes with these returns. Don't try to hit perfect kills with these. Remember, since the server is in front for the serve, he will probably get the ones you shoot for low boards. Also, the chance of skipping isn't worth the risk to go for kills on short hops. Go for a passing shot (down-the-line, cross court, or angle pass) that hits two to four feet up the front wall.

The technique for effectively cutting off lob serves is an advanced skill. Proper set-up is vital to receive the lob. You must position your body toward the side wall as early as possible. This will allow better control for this difficult shot.

For the short hop, be sure to keep your eye on the ball. The successful timing for this shot is difficult and requires total concentration. The biggest mistake here is to look up at the front wall, producing a skip or left-up return. Use a compact swing, shoot for a reasonable passing zone,

and remember to follow through.

To attack the serve on the fly, make sure to allow the ball to drop into a low

To return the serve on the short bounce, the receiver may ignore the five foot zone once the ball has bounced.

enough position. Always attack the fly at waist level or lower. The biggest mistake here is to attack the serve too high and produce a skip or left-up return.

Executed properly, these aggressive returns will abruptly alter the rhythm imposed by the server on lob serves. The server must then significantly adjust his own timing and court positioning to fit the pace imposed by the receiver. Work on the timing, and practice these shots to attack the lob serve, gain that all-important control early in the rally, and win.

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Overview of Racquetball in Europe

Racquetball came into popularity in Europe in the mid and late 1970's much as it did in the United States. Also like the US and most other pockets of racquetball in the world, the continued growth of the sport has depended upon word-of-mouth promotion, and extremely dedicated efforts by those special individuals and organizations that keep the sport growing. While US troops stationed in Europe were primarily responsible for the introduction and much of the early popularity of the game, the Europeans received racquetball warmly and went on to produce a number of exceptional players and national teams.

Willi Wenzel of Bad Tolz Germany is



considered to be the first European introduced to the sport on a US base around 1976. In 1978, the first two civilian racquetball courts in Europe were opened in Leidschendam, Holland. Courts opened in West Germany and Switzerland soon after. By the early 1980's, the game was catching on in Great Britain, Belgium, Sweden, France, Spain, and Ireland. More recently Austria, Greece, and Hungary have joined in.

In the first couple of years, the Americans provided support, technical advice on the subtleties of the game, and good competition for the pioneer European players. Tournaments on the American bases became a bridge of hospitality, competition and friendship between the more experi-

enced players and the talented beginners. In the beginning, European audiences watched in awe of players such as Lou Souther, Bob Ellis, Shauna Lacey, Jim Mattingly, Eddy Baptista, Bob Gordon, Mel Kince, Barbara Faulkenberry, the Arnold twins, Frank Toney, George Haegerty, and Jesus Montezuma.

It was not long before the European players gained the experience needed to overcome their American guests. In just a couple of years, Europeans such as Ton Luyckx, Jorg Hanold, Mirjam Wielheesen, Jurgen Denk, Arno Mooyman, Willi Wenzel, and Ronald de Zwijger began to claim significant victories over the Americans. Around this same time, more and more courts and tournaments began to appear. The trend continued and by the mid 1980's, Europeans were winning nearly every major European tournament. Today, only rarely does an American win a major event in Europe.

Even with the Europeans dominating the sport at home, as the 1990's rolled around, the American military contributed greatly to the number of active participants in European racquetball (as well as a large number of courts). When the political climate started doing back-flips with the changes in the Soviet Union in recent years, the resulting withdrawal of more than 50% of U.S. troops brought about an unexpected twist to racquetball. Suddenly, numbers were decreasing, tournaments were shrinking, and there was no means in sight of replacing the departing masses of players. The remaining Americans seem less obsessed with the game than their predecessors, and no longer travel to such traditional tournament meccas as Tralee in Ireland, Hamburg in Germany, and



Competitors from the Netherlands at the seventh European Championships. Left to right: Jurgen Denk, Daphne Wannee, Angelique Baart de la Faille, Phil Dingrer

Zoetermeer in the Netherlands.

With the consistent compilations of talented national teams and active tournament schedules, the Europeans seem to be resolved to maintain the sport with growth as a primary objective. In Europe, the task is twofold. First (as in the rest of the racquetball world) the push to promote the game means bringing in and keeping new players. This means addressing the need for more visibility for the game, the need for more promotional dollars, the need for easy access to equipment and facilities, etc. This, then, leads into the second objective which is unique to Europe, which is to retain access to the courts opened by the U.S. military. An active effort by the leaders of European racquetball is in place to persuade U.S. military officials to keep racquetball facilities open at closing military bases.

Along with the push to promote, and to maintain existing courts in Europe, 1993 saw Europe reach out in global competition as well. With a very successful World Games in The Hague, and by hosting the U.S. junior national team tour, Europe firmly stated that it is serious about racquetball and will be a formidable force in competition over the coming years.

Wheelchair Racquetball Debuts in the United Kingdom

In the midst of a worldwide trend of growth in programs for disabled athletes, Great Britain has become the latest nation to promote wheelchair racquetball. The formation of the British Wheelchair Racquetball Association in early 1993 gave rise to a series of clinics and demonstrations which has spurred tremendous interest in the wheelchair game. In the wake of this boom of wheelchair players, Great Britain has now formed its first full team for competition in next year's World Racquetball Championships in San Luis Potosi, Mexico.

The recent Stoke Mandeville Developmental Games in Aylesbury, England saw more nations participating in wheelchair racquetball than in any previous tournament anywhere. Mark Cormack and Ken Michaylenko (ranked #2 and #3 respectively in Canada) arrived early for some intense exhibition matches that delighted the European crowds. David Hinton, chairman of both the Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports

Federation's Racquetball Division, and the IRF's Committee for Athletes with Disabilities has expressed great enthusiasm regarding Great Britain's amazing strides in the game in 1993.

The actual British debut for wheelchair racquetball was 1993's First Annual Turkey Shoot hosted by the U.S. Air Force personnel at R.A.F. Chicksands in Bedfordshire, England. The six pioneer wheelchair players for the inaugural event; Steve Jones, Danny Ackroyd, Steve Wood, George Gouldbourn-Simons, Gary Vaughn, and Mark Fowler set a fierce pace for competition right from the start. If 1993 has been any indication, the world will be seeing great things from Great Britain.

1993 European Championships

The seventh European Championships in Hamburg, Germany brought about quite a few surprises last year. Teams from Germany and Belgium upset the favored Irish, British, and Dutch teams in both the men's and women's competitions. In fact, of the previous top three, only Ireland could hold any ground against the two new threats with a first place in women's and a second place in men's and combined.

The level of play at this year's event proved that the Europeans are very serious about the game and have in mind shaking up things in global competition. As usual, the entire event reflected the European Racquetball Federation's (ERF) attention to detail, organization, and sportsmanship.

Interesting matches included the three game cliffhanger that was to be Marie Duignan's final match (and final victory) for the Irish team. Local favorite Trevor Hayter of Germany delighted crowds with a series amazingly fast and accurate ace serves. In the end, however, his opponent Jeroen van der Holst of the Netherlands prevailed in the match that had turned into a series of very complex mind games.

Rene Hehemann
General Secretary
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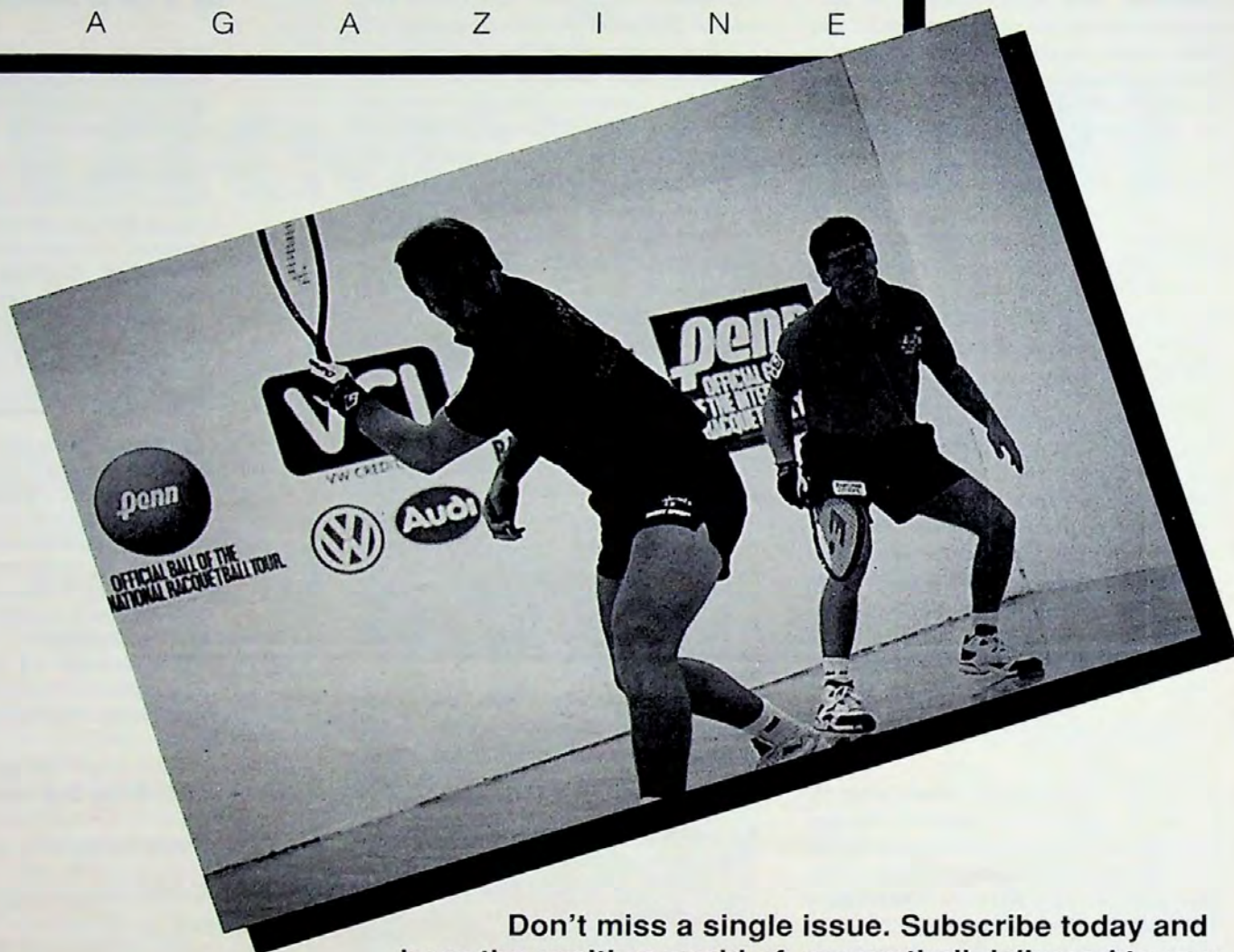
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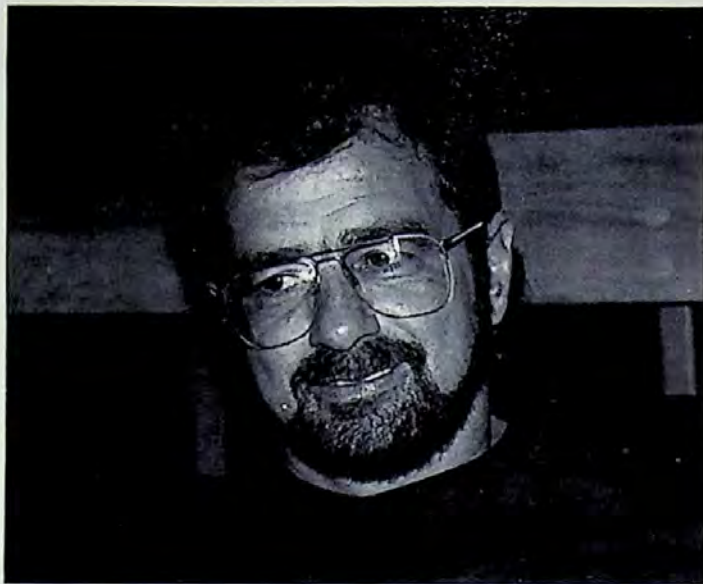
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Coach

Quick, what do Lynn Adams, Egan Inoue, Brian Hawkes, and Robin Levine all have in common? Give up? They have all worked extensively with one of the most successful coaches in racquetball, Jim Carson. The resident court sports guru at Southern California's famous Racquetball World clubs, Carson has remained at the cutting

edge of racquetball for more than twenty years. He was one of the nation's top amateur players of the mid 1970's with national championships in both the indoor game and the outdoor game. He holds the distinction of having coached one of the most successful strings of players ever. He has seen the inner workings of the club industry, watched the ups & downs at all levels of the sport, conducted some of the most popular tournaments on the west coast, and played an important role in both the men's and women's pro tours. He was once married to and is still very close friends with women's racquetball's brightest star, Lynn Adams. Recently, Carson shared his



an interview with California's **Jim Carson**

By Marvin Quertermous, Photos by Charlie Palek

Q: Jim, how did you start out in racquetball?

J.C: I started playing in 1972. I played a lot of outdoors and some indoors in those days. When I started seeing the great pros of the period, [Charlie] Brumfield, [Bud] Muchleisen, [Steve] Strandemo, I became more and more interested in the indoor game. I got good enough to be competitive with some top players, but never the pros. I believe that the reason I improved and pro-

gressed as a player, is just my natural perception of sports. Especially in basketball, my first love, my friends started noticing that I watched sports very differently than they did. I studied the game, dissected it, naturally breaking down opponents. This natural perception lead to insight that translated into fast means to improvements. I found ways to use what I saw. I never put in the dedication or discipline to go far enough as a player to become a pro, but I

can use those same insights to help other players that are willing to work hard enough to get there.

Q: How do you work with these players?

J.C: The players that I've actually coached were already good players when we started. We started at "root level" and just dissected their games. We look at the large picture - physical, mental, everything. Every practice, every hour on the court, we work on



the whole picture. Physically, we work on weaknesses, while at the same time we address attitude, concentration, confidence, etc. I am always teaching different ways of thinking. Finding the things a player does or thinks that stops him from getting better.

Q: Is that difficult - getting players to look at those things?

J.C: It's like pulling teeth. Most players have so many ideas about themselves and their games that aren't true that have to be dealt with before we can make any progress. Brian [Hawkes] is a great example. Anything we ever talked about, I had to show him why. If we went on the court and I said, "this is the front wall," he would say, "Why can't this be the front wall?" (pointing at the back wall). Remember, especially with the pro players, you're talking about their lives. They judge themselves as people based on their performances on the court. So they're usually very reluctant to change any of their ways of thinking. And they have to - to get better.

Q: What kinds of things do they have to change?

J.C: Well they have to deal with all of their own issues. Maybe fear of going for it at certain points, maybe just lack of confidence, stuff like that. These players' attitudes and demands on themselves are amazing. Many of them can accomplish something great, then be completely down on themselves because they didn't do it quick enough or pretty enough or whatever. Robin [Levine] can beat a top pro in

four games but can't enjoy it for worrying about the game she lost. I started working with Terri Gilreath when she was about a C player because she had such a drive to improve. In an incredibly short time, she found herself facing Lynn in a pro final and was devastated because she lost. Instead of celebrating her accomplishment of second place in one of her first pro events, she was crushed because she didn't win. Terri went on to a number three ranking, but at the time considered that a defeat. Only now can she look back and see just how well she played and how much she had accomplished. Lynn was the exception. Lynn was a great optimist. She always found something positive to focus on. Even when she was starting to feel the effects of the MS in recent years, she found reward in scrapping for the wins. She could see something positive in "winning ugly". Almost nobody realizes the importance of mental skills and conditioning. The Hogans and the Yellens and the Swains do.

Q: Who was the first player you worked with?

J.C: Lynn. I saw Lynn play in a tournament and could see that she was a very talented athlete. I introduced myself, gave her my card, and invited her to call if she ever wanted to take lessons. She called a couple of weeks later and we began working together. We went to see a WPA tournament together and in the midst of watching a pro match we agreed that this would be her destiny. So right from the start, we started training Lynn to dominate. That was the goal with all of her training,

to be the best of the best. It became a goal and sort of an obsession for both of us throughout our working together, our marriage, and our friendship.

Q: I'm going to name the players you've worked with and I'd like you to tell me briefly what you tried or are trying to work on with each one.

J.C: O.K.

Q: Lynn Adams

J.C: Absolute mental toughness - thinking like a champion - every skill that either of us could think of that she would need to dominate

Q: Egan Inoue

J.C: What an animal. He is one of the most physically gifted individuals I have ever seen. It took some time with Egan to learn what makes him tick. He was the first male racquetball player I had coached. When you combine that with the cultural differences that come from his being Japanese, I had to watch carefully to see how to work with his thinking. We did most of our best work off the court, before and after big matches, working on addressing his fears and perceptions.

Q: Brian Hawkes

J.C: Backhand. Brian really worked hard at the mental stuff, visualization, concentration, everything. Sometimes I thought he worked too hard on mental training. We worked more together on the court. He had an awesome forehand when he started working with me, but his backhand was just about nonexistent. I saw Brian work

so hard to come so far. He just dominated the outdoor game. Until his last season on the tour, he had only made it to the semis one time. In his last season alone he won one stop, placed second in another, and made a couple of semis. There's no telling where he would have gone with racquetball if he hadn't decided to get married and grab an opportunity in banking.

Q: Robin Levine

J.C: She would dive into a wall on a drill if you asked her to. With her you just have to help her develop her skills to match her tremendous drive. She likes to hit the ball above her waist, so a lot of our work has been things like practicing shooting the ball from a much lower position. You'll see big things from Robin. I think she's just about to come into her own.

Q: Cheryl Gudinas

J.C: We really just started together. Most of our work has been skills and physical stuff. Mentally, she has really started pushing herself to become more aggressive. At the Olympic Festival last year she wrote "Go for it" on the tops of her shoes, just to help remember to stay aggressive.

Q: Tony Jelso

J.C: Tony's a really strong kid. At 23, he's very mature, very disciplined. He often seems much older. Tony has a lot of talent and is very mentally tough. He just needs some refinement to work out the bugs in his game. He will be top five material.

Q: Adam Carp

J.C: I'm not sure what to teach Adam. He has loads of talent. He's exceptionally quick and has an awesome backhand. Adam hasn't had to work for most of his skills, so he has a very low "work threshold". What Adam would call a ten on a one-to-ten scale of work difficulty, is really a three. But he's only 21 - he has great potential - we'll have to wait and see what he can do.

Q: Marci Drexler

J.C: Marci and I could never agree on style enough to work together. She is so aggressive and wants to do or die on every single shot. The problem then is with consistency. If she's on, look out. She is the single best player on the women's tour for any one match. The problem is Michelle [Gould] who's on, day in and day out.

Q: Mike Yellen once told me that if he played smart enough, he might not win them all, but he could win most of them. Winning most of them is still an amazing thing. I guess Marty Hogan took the stance that you go all out every time instead.

J.C: Yeah, but Marty used that to his advantage. He earned the reputation for initiating power racquetball, but his ceiling ball was probably the best ever in the game. Marty hit lob serves often that were a nightmare to try to return. In fact, Lynn would learn ceiling balls from watching Hogan. His power was so impressive, most people overlooked the fact that he played really smart control racquetball as well.

Marci amazed me one day by saying that she would hate playing as conservatively as Lynn. I never thought of Lynn as conservative on the court. I guess next to Marci's aggressiveness, she may have been. Many players make the mistake of assuming what a given player will do instead of paying attention to what he is really doing that is working. That's my claim-to-fame, perception of what is really going on on the court. [Cliff] Swain is amazing to watch since he is just so good. But I've found some things that he does that can be attacked. I mentioned one to him once last year and he was amazed that anybody had caught on to it.

Q: What things are those?

J.C: That's not for public knowledge yet, but Egan will know.

Q: You stay very involved with the pro tours.

J.C: Well more now with the IRT than with the WPRA since I no longer run a women's stop. I host the Los Angeles VCI event for IRT each year and it's fantastic.

Q: What do you see for the IRT?

J.C: The tour is flourishing. The cohesiveness among the players is the key. In the past, they've gone in so many directions, nobody could keep them together. Now, they seem to be able to focus better as a group. Hank Marcus is responsible for a lot of that. They have something good, they just have to band together. VCI's sponsorship seems like a great marriage for



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Adam Carp

Up and Coming California Open Player

both the players and VCI. Politics spoiled a lot of opportunities for them in the past. A lot of the players at the top now understand the importance of working hard and promoting. They hustle on and off the court to give their sponsors good exposure and a good professional product. Most of them know that to make it competing with other sports requires hard work on their part more than just playing good racquetball. Athletes can be temperamental and there's still problems, but many of the most visible players have caught on to their own responsibilities. That's where their successes come from.

Q: And the WPRA?

J.C.: Things are tough right now. They seem to be having trouble pulling together. It's a male dominated sport, so they have a tougher sell right from the start. Unfortunately, most of the women pros haven't been willing to work together and to get out and work to create opportunities. When Lynn played the tour, at least four regular pro stops were a direct result of her connections and her jumping in with her own time money and effort to solidify them as stops. Lynn worked tirelessly to

keep building interest in the tour, and to make sure it was worth while for these clubs to do pro stops. A lot of credit along those same lines goes to Caryn [McKinney] and Molly [O'Brien]. A lot of the rest of today's players are good athletes, but they are a little bit used to things being handled for them. They came up through the amateur ranks where arrangements were made for them and they had few responsibilities other than playing. When faced with the responsibilities of organizing and promoting a player-operated pro tour, most of them were taken by surprise. Also for the male market, Lynn gave credibility to the women's game. She would open a clinic by playing (and beating) the best men's player in the club. The respect she gained from doing this gave her instructions more importance to the male audiences. Now Molly still works to promote, but for things to grow again for the WPRA, it will take more players pulling together and doing more organization and promotion.

Q: What do you see for the club business?

J.C.: The future for all clubs is just what we stress at the Racquetball Worlds -

member retention. You have to keep players motivated and keep them playing. Make sure that the club does all it can to help them stay enthusiastic and challenged. Clubs will grow if the current members stay happy and feel that they get their money's worth.

Q: How do you do that?

J.C.: In every way you can think of. We have a unique system because each of our four clubs has twenty to thirty courts. We keep programs going for people who have never touched a racquet. We try to bring in people from aerobics classes in a way that they are not embarrassed or intimidated - people that might like the game but might be hesitant to try it. We keep lots of leagues, frequent tournaments, good juniors programs - things like that. Give everybody something to stay excited about.

Q: Jim, I'd like to name some players and get you to tell me the best word to describe them.

J.C.: One word? I'll try but it may take more than one.

Q: Cliff Swain

J.C.: Dominates

Q: Charlie Brumfield

J.C.: Smartest (ever)

Q: Steve Strandemo

J.C.: His nickname - "The Rat" - anything. I mean anything, to win

Q: Shannon Wright

J.C.: Bulldog

Q: Egan Inoue

J.C.: Paradox

Q: Heather McKay

J.C.: Regal

Q: Michelle Gould

J.C.: Mentally tough

Q: Caryn McKinney

J.C.: Achievement

Q: Mike Ray

J.C.: Illusionist

Q: Jerry Hilecher

J.C.: Gutsy

Q: John Ellis

J.C.: Blaster

Q: Dave Peck

J.C.: Tenacious

Q: Ruben Gonzalez

J.C.: Amazing

Q: Jack Newman

J.C.: Controlled smart

Q: Lynn Adams

J.C.: The best

Can Gould be Stopped?

With the absence of many of the familiar names from the WPRA, the tour has taken on a very different look. Instead of Malia Bailey, Jackie Paraiso-Gibson, Kay Kuhfeld, or Toni Bevelock, this season's tour opened with two events that brought Cheryl Gudinas, Ellen Crawford, and Laura Fenton to the forefront of the WPRA. The more familiar Chris Evon, Molly O'Brien, Marcy Lynch, and Lynn Coburn were on hand and in top form at both of the early events.

One thing that hasn't changed in the WPRA is the absolute domination by Michelle Gould. With only Robin Levine and Marci Drexler providing any real

SEMIS

Gould d. O'Brien
11-5, 11-7, 11-2
Levine d. Fenton
11-3, 11-1, 11-9

Michelle Gould

7-11, 11-8, 11-6, 11-3
Robin Levine

QUARTERS

Gould d. Gudinas
11-7, 11-4, 11-3
O'Brien d. Crawford
11-10, 11-8, 11-10
Fenton d. Coburn
11-7, 6-11, 10-11, 11-4, 11-4
Levine d. Evon
11-3, 11-9, 11-1

Syracuse



threat, Gould has stormed through the first two events of the season allowing only one game to be taken from her.

With a fairly short season and lots of changes, it should be interesting to follow the changes in the WPRA this year. The biggest question still remains, "Can Gould be stopped?"

Michelle Gould seems to be stronger and smarter each season, picking up and improving from right where she left off.



Philadelphia

SEMIS

Gould d. Levine
11-4, 11-3, 11-2
Drexler d. Gudinas
11-7, 11-4, 11-6

Michelle Gould

11-4, 11-8, 11-3

Marci Drexler

QUARTERS

Gould d. O'Brien
11-1, 11-2, 11-1
Levine d. Crawford
11-6, 9-11, 11-6, 11-9
Drexler d. Fenton
11-4, 11-3, 6-11, 11-2
Gudinas d. Coburn
11-2, 11-8, 9-11, 11-0

Marcy Lynch dives into a return against Marci Drexler at the '94 Grand Slam in Philadelphia. Drexler and Robin Levine keep challenging Gould but she appears untouchable.



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