

National Racquetball

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3 • \$1.00 • SEPTEMBER, 1975

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE U.S. RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION





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National Racquetball

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3 • \$1.00 • SEPTEMBER, 1975

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On the Cover:

Beautiful over-view of the Aurora glass court where Steve Keeley (left) and Steve Serot battled it out in last year's finals. Aurora will again be a part of the N.R.C. pro-am tour, this year in January. For all the sites and dates turn to page 32.

—photo by Arthur Shay

BALL BUYERS BEWARE!

We regret to report that some strange things are happening in the racquetball ball business. Our purpose in bringing them to light is to protect you and also to protect ourselves.

Let's start with misrepresentation. An oriental manufacturer is marketing inferior balls bearing the endorsement of the U.S.R.A. An eastern firm is distributing these balls and we are now instituting legal action. When you order again, be absolutely sure the balls are manufactured by Seamco, the world's largest and most experienced racquetball manufacturer. If it's the green ball the professionals use, it will be endorsed by the National Racquetball Club. If it's the black ball most amateurs use, the 558, it will be endorsed by the United States Racquetball Association. We do not endorse any other ball or manufacturer for the following reasons:

You deserve the manufacturer who promptly and conscientiously replaces all defective balls.

You deserve the manufacturer who gives you the ball with the longest life, most consistency, and highest quality.

You deserve the manufacturer who makes the ball for the National Championships as well as your practice play.

You deserve the manufacturer who both supports your Association and sponsors the national tournaments.

You deserve the manufacturer who sells the ball with the best performance at the most reasonable price for indoor and outdoor play.

You deserve the manufacturer who makes no false claims, is not a newcomer,—and does not buy his endorsement,—but *earns* it.

You know, some people approve numerous balls,—regardless of quality or acceptance. We can't do that because players expect our balls to pass all the tests,—and be just as durable in local tournaments as in national. They want to play with the ball they count on in tournaments. We wouldn't endorse any ball that would not stand up to the rigors of the Nationals. How would you like to get used to one ball all year and when you really need the feel of the ball at tournament time,—have a freak ball used that blows your game entirely? That cannot happen if you stick with Seamco, just as we have. You'll get the same ball no matter where you play,—or who or when. **WE BELIEVE YOU WILL PLAY BETTER WHEN YOU KNOW YOUR BALL.** You'll always know ours,—and it's available world-wide.

Nor do we bounce from one manufacturer to another. Nor do we spread our loyalty. There isn't



enough royalty money in all the world to make us endorse, or even approve something with which you would be disappointed. We have too much respect for you.

There are so many people in the ball business today that it is hard to keep track of them all. They all claim some sort of an approval and it's hard to know who to believe. Don't let advertising fool you, get the facts for yourself. Next time you read an ad that says their black ball is better or livelier than our green,—take one of each and find out for yourself.

There must be some reason why Seamco makes more racquetballs than anyone else,—that their balls are used in more national tournaments than any other,—that they have made balls for court sports longer than anyone else in the world,—why they have been able to put over five million dollars into new, ultra-modern facilities with specifically developed equipment designed solely for quality control,—and . . .

. . . strange as it may seem,—why they recently terminated their contract with other associations to devote their entire production to balls endorsed **ONLY** by the U.S.R.A. and N.R.C. But then, it's not really all that strange,—is it?!

Bob Kendler

Pro Racquetball Gloves

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COSMETIC SURGERY

National Racquetball magazine has undergone a face-lift. Those of you who have stood by us the past two years know that we have done our best to bring you the most interesting racquetball coverage possible, presented in a professional and pleasing-to-the-eye manner. In this area, we think we have succeeded,—there is no question that *National Racquetball* is the finest racquetball magazine today.

However, we can do better, on two scores, and that's why you see so many changes in this issue. We feel we have not lived up to our promise of providing our membership with an issue on a bi-monthly basis. *National Racquetball*, although good, has not been published enough. It's rather like the quality over quantity syndrome in reverse.

The second area that I felt needed improvement was layout and design. Even though to this point we are unquestionably the best in the limited field of racquetball publications, the best still wasn't good enough. In order to attract national recognition for a good looking, fast reading, professional publication I needed help. And I went out and got it.

You see, one person cannot do it alone and do it well. I have more pride in my work than to just "get the magazine out." I want it to be well done. Yet the editorship of *National Racquetball* is but one of my many responsibilities as the National Director of the U.S. Racquetball Association. And the

growth of racquetball has erupted so dramatically that to keep up with that growth and still fulfill all of my responsibilities has become difficult.

So the changes in this issue mark a new era. With the aid of Mr. Joseph M. Patten, President of Corporate Graphics, a Chicago-based firm, we have begun a relationship devoted to end the only two problems of our magazine,—get it out on time, and improve the design, layout and color quality.

With most of the burden of layout, proofreading, and cropping off of the shoulders of one person and onto the shoulders of this large, well respected magazine-specializing firm, more time is freed for our staff to do what we do best,—promote racquetball.

This is not to infer that any of the fine coverage of racquetball will be lost. Quite to the contrary, our coverage will increase with our issues now dependable. And the U.S. Racquetball Association still retains 100 per cent control of content.

Why was this face-lift so important? The reasons are many and interdependent. Our final goal with *National Racquetball* is for it to cease being a money-losing venture, a drain on the resources of the U.S.R.A. In order to do this and still offer the membership at the low, low price of \$3 per year, revenue must be obtained from other sources. These sources would be royalties and advertising.

Royalties are being worked on, as witnessed by the U.S.R.A.'s recent agreement with the Seamco Sporting Goods firm on

endorsement of the Seamco 558 racquetball. This move should substantially increase revenues.

Advertising is a different situation. Everybody realizes that racquetball and *National Racquetball* magazine are natural advertising areas for soft drinks, beer and liquor, energy drinks, athletic footwear, deodorants and colognes, and many other untouched advertising areas. In order to attract these companies and convince them to advertise with us, two things needed to be done,—increase circulation, and make the interior of *National Racquetball* more professional.

We have already made the interior much, much better as witnessed by this issue. And more dynamic design work is in the future. So score one is settled.

In order to increase the circulation, we get back to problem number one, getting the magazine out. After each issue of *National Racquetball* is distributed throughout North America, our membership roster swells, as players pick up the magazine from friends or in clubs and join. We need to be in your hands in order to increase our membership through you.

And really you, our membership, are the key. The whole changeover in this magazine is so that we can better provide you with service, coverage and instruction in racquetball. In order to better promote the sport for you, we need help from you.

We hope you like the new *National Racquetball*.

LEACH

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Planting the Forest

The first annual U.S. Racquetball Association National Juniors Championships this winter will mark the beginning of a program that will prove in the long run to be the most rewarding one in racquetball. This event, at the Orlando Y.M.C.A. in Florida, will highlight the 18 and under players, who will be vying for this first National Juniors crown.

The fact that the event is at a perfect time of year, in a perfect climate and made to order for the Juniors with a trip to Walt Disney World, is really inconsequential to the overall concept of the Juniors. Sure, the kids are going to have a ball, and that's what we want. But there is so much more.

We are giving the juniors a chance to compete among themselves, against players of their own age from all parts of the nation. The 18-and-under age groups will have outstanding play, of that we are sure.

The 15-and-under age group is co-ed, as you will note in the entry form in this issue, and we have done this for a reason. First of all, we think that many young ladies of this age group can probably hold their own against the young men. Secondly, we want everybody to have a chance to play as much as possible.

The fact that we have instituted a Girls 18-and-under bracket is important, we feel, because nobody has ever held tournament competition for girls of this age. And it is the policy of the U.S.R.A. to promote racquetball for these kids right now.

But I have yet to touch on the two

most important facets of the National Juniors program, and the goals for which we strive with the juniors. The first is to help build good, solid citizens and to use racquetball as the means. Sportsmanship, equality and conditioning are all basic and admirable qualities of our society. We feel racquetball and the U.S.R.A. can do its share of bringing upstanding citizens into that society through the National Juniors. There is no better way than to establish physical fitness for our children.

How can we ignore the juniors any longer? They are the future of our sport. We don't mean the young pros like 19-year-olds Steve Serot and Rich Wagner, or 17-year-old Marty Hogan, or 18-year-old Craig McCoy. We mean the unnamed nine, 10, 11 and 12-year-olds who have found racquetball the fun game, the physical activity they can carry with them for the rest of their lives, whether they become top players or not.

The future businesspersons, lawyers, laborers, jocks, executives and yes, housewives who will carry the racquetball banner high into the 1980's and 1990's,—these are today's juniors. Our sport owes them the chance to continue their enjoyment of the game, to allow them to test their competitive instincts on the court.

In 1953 we began the U.S. Handball Association's National Juniors program at Bob Kendler's Town Club in Chicago. Most of the participants in those early years were in the 12-15 age categories. The U.S.H.A.'s National Juniors was



an instant success and continues to be one of the highlights of the handball season every year.

We have developed many a top player through the juniors, including the current top two players in the world, Fred Lewis and Dennis Hofflander.

But what about the thousands of other kids who played in the handball juniors over the past 22 years? No, they have not become national champs, at least not in handball. But I'll bet you over 90 per cent of them still play, still recall fondly those years when as youngsters they batted the ball around amongst their peers. And they are carrying the handball banner right now, and proudly.

We expect the same results from the racquetball juniors. It is our goal, and one that obviously will not be realized today or tomorrow. But laying the groundwork can be almost as satisfying as seeing the final result.

It's like planting a tree or a forest in 1975. Probably within this generation little of the fruits of the planting will be realized. But that good feeling inside represents the knowledge that in future years that forest will be big and bold and strong. The fruit off those trees will age and lead to more young trees and more and more.

This is racquetball's future. We want to cultivate it. We want to aid it, give it guidance and care. In 20 years we can look back at these beginnings and contentedly say, "It was well worth it."

December 26-30 in Orlando. We'll see you there,—boys, girls, parents and friends. Come along and plant some seeds with us.

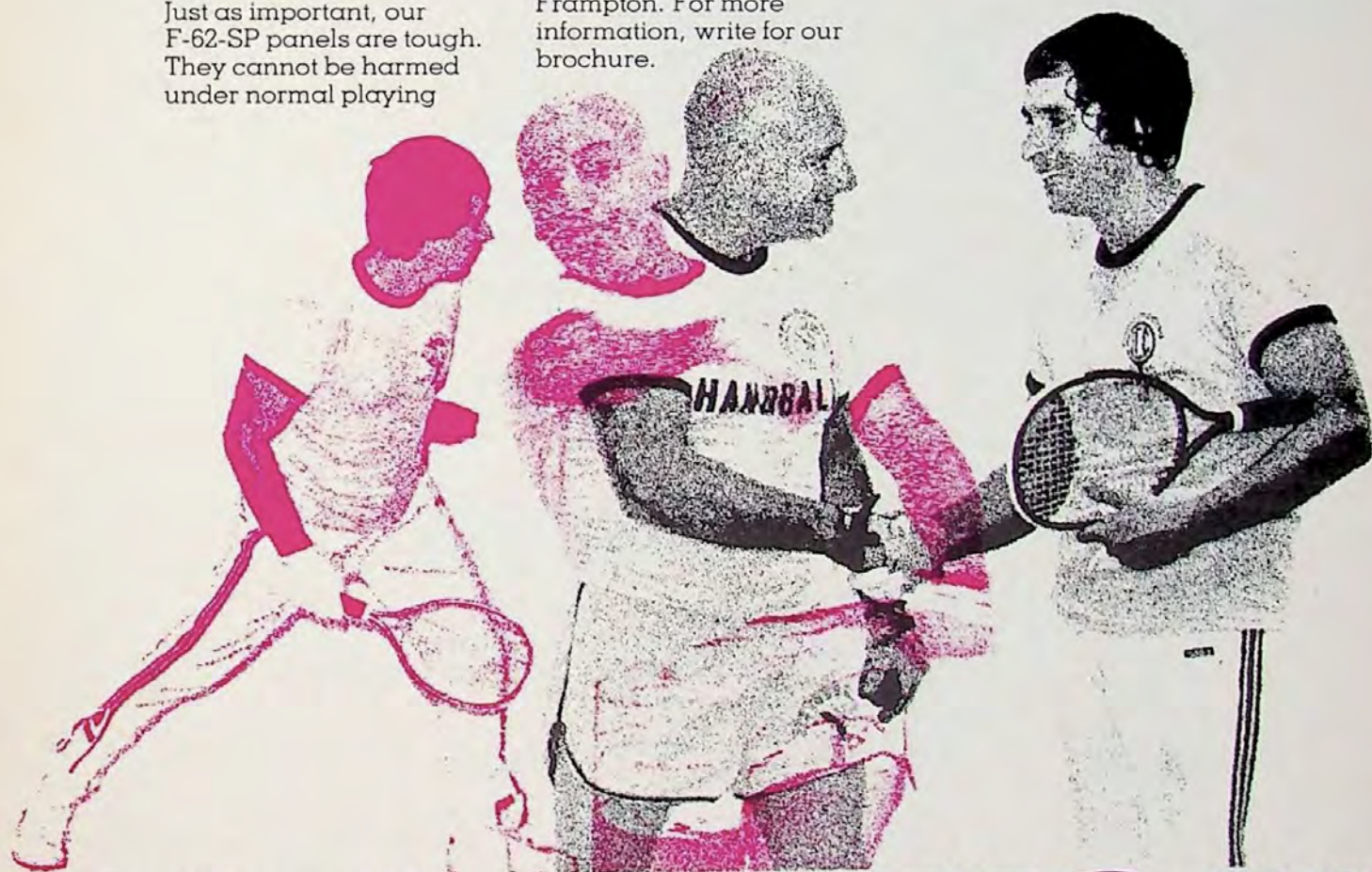
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Coming soon: An important new product from Frampton. After several years of planning and research, we are going to introduce a new product that will be of great interest to anyone planning to build a new court installation. Watch these pages for more details.



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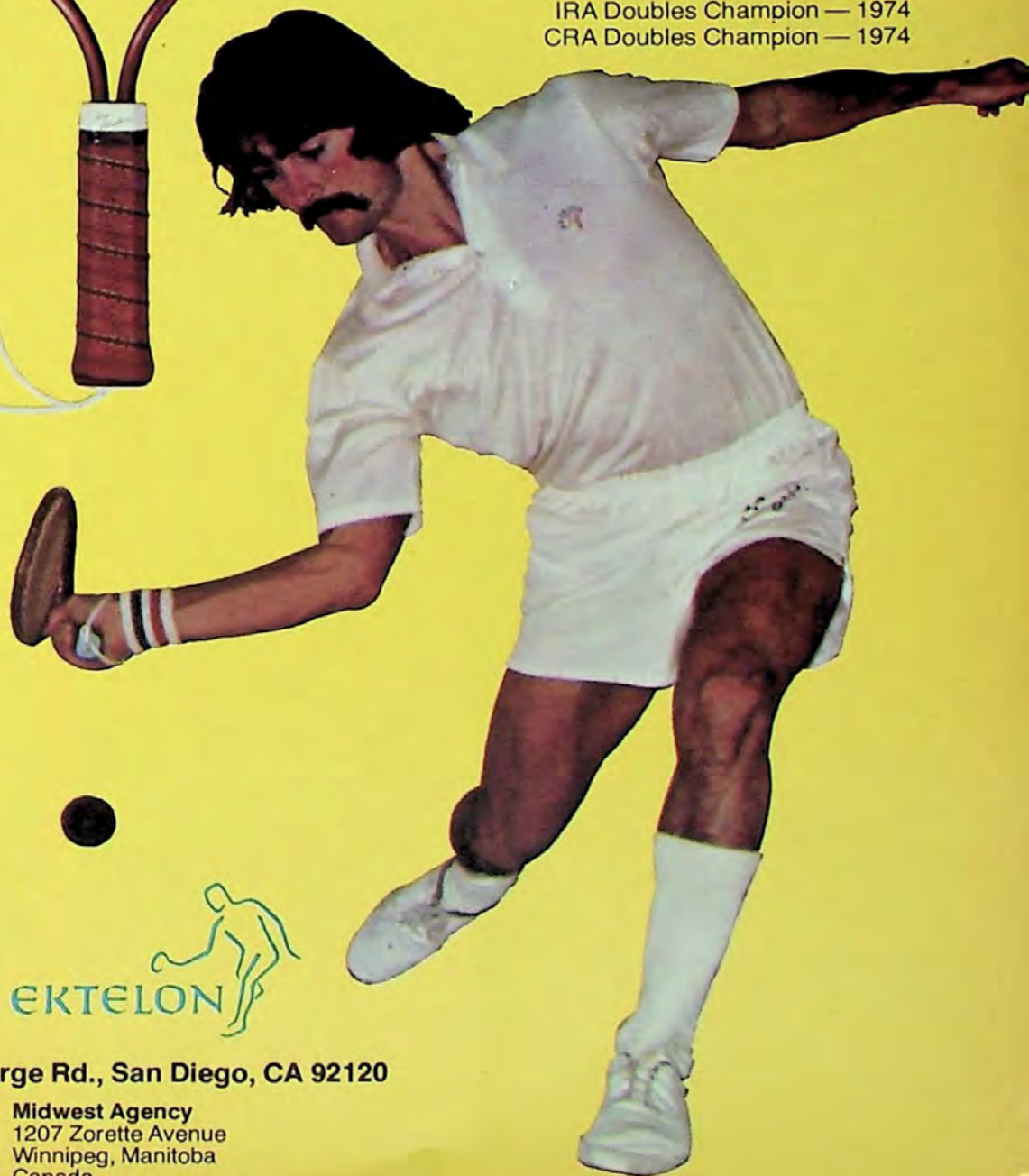
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CHOOSING A RACQUET

Ken Wong is the 28-year-old teaching pro at The Court House, a new eight court, court club in St. Louis. A top 16 professional player over the past five years, Ken comes from a good tennis and squash background.

A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he received his degree in computer technology, Ken is currently working on his Masters degree at St. Louis' Washington University.

Known for his hustle, conditioning and smart play, Wong has always been able to stay on the court with every top player he's met. His intelligence and understanding of racquetball's fundamentals makes him one of the nation's outstanding teaching professionals, where he is in constant, daily exercises with beginning players.



This is the first in a series of racquetball articles which are designed for the novice player (beginner). Its purpose is to help develop a beginner into a well rounded player in the minimum amount of time. However, because games played by pros involve use of the basic fundamentals 90 per cent of the time, these articles should benefit players of all levels of play and present a unified approach toward learning a sound offense and defense. The series will discuss racquets, an overview of game philosophy, the basic shots, and court position. The series will end with articles covering proper game development following the novice stage.

This first article discusses how to choose a racquet since racquet purchase is usually one of the first steps taken by any player. There is no real answer to the question, "What is the best racquet to buy?" However, there are some helpful guidelines. I will present some of these guidelines and describe the differences between the most popular racquets.

Most racquet frames are made of either wood, aluminum, or fiberglass. A wood racquet is the least expensive type of racquet; but the hitting characteristics of wood racquets are inferior to those of fiberglass and aluminum racquets. Unlike tennis, there are not the same advantages in using a wood racquet in racquetball. However, for a player who is more interested in low price and durability, the wood racquet is still a good buy.

Fiberglass racquets are made of a nylon and fiberglass composition. Because they have more flex (bend more) than other racquets,

Top pro Ken Wong, instructor at the new Court House club in St. Louis, follows through on a backhand. The author of this new instructional series, Wong is known as the smartest of players.

Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Wood	Inexpensive (\$5-\$15) Durable	Usually heavy No performance advantages
Fiberglass	Light weight More control Medium priced (\$15-\$30)	Not as durable as other racquets
Aluminum	Durable Light or medium weight Greater power potentially	More expensive (\$25-\$45) Less control

fiberglass racquets result in greater ball control than other racquets. They usually carry a 90 day guarantee and are more susceptible to breakage than other types of racquets. Because of their light weight and flex, fiberglass racquets are highly suitable for women, smaller men, and tournament players who like to hold the ball longer on the racquet.

Some players feel that fiberglass racquets give less power than aluminum, however, this point has not been proven. Top players currently using fiberglass include National Champion Charlie Brumfield, Steve Serot, Steve Keeley and Ron Rubenstein.

Aluminum racquets are the most expensive and durable racquets. They usually have a one year guarantee, and if not overly abused, they will probably last almost a life time. Because they are stiffer than

fiberglass racquets, they give less control for the average player. Aluminum racquets are good, all-around racquets because of their light weight, durability, and possible added power. Current pros using aluminum include Steve Strandemo, Bill Schmidtke, Jerry Hilecher and Ron Strom.

The following table summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of these three kinds of racquets:

When buying a racquet, keep the following points in mind:

1. Match your budget, ability, and physical size with the racquet characteristics given above.
2. If possible, try out a racquet that you intend to buy by borrowing a friend's racquet.
3. It usually takes at least two weeks to get used to the flex of a fiberglass racquet.

4. Grip sizes do not have to be as large as tennis grips; a small grip can be enlarged, but a large grip usually can't be reduced. Narrow grips are great for forehands, but poor for backhands.

5. Rubber grips become very slippery after five minutes of play unless you wear a glove.

6. Price is not necessarily a good indicator of quality.

7. A racquet which is too heavy or too light can be detrimental to proper stroke development. Women usually use racquets weighing 8.5 to 9 ounces; men usually use racquets weighing 9 to 9.5 ounces. But since it is the weight of the racquet head that is important, these weights are only guidelines.

8. Gut strings offer no advantage over nylon in racquetball racquets; however, a multi-filament nylon such as Vantage is more durable than the strings used by the manufacturers.

9. If you buy a metal or fiberglass racquet, mail in the guarantee registration card.

10. Poor playing usually is a result of improper strokes, not a bad racquet.

11. Fiberglass racquets should be strung between 23 to 27 pounds; aluminum racquets should be strung between 28 to 35 pounds.

Everyone has a slightly different racquet requirement; so there are no set purchasing rules. However, the above guidelines will aid you in choosing a racquet from the available supply of racquets.

The next article will lay the foundation for all other future articles by presenting an overview of a particular game philosophy.



The Mag 2, the second in Leach's series of Mag aluminum framed racquets.



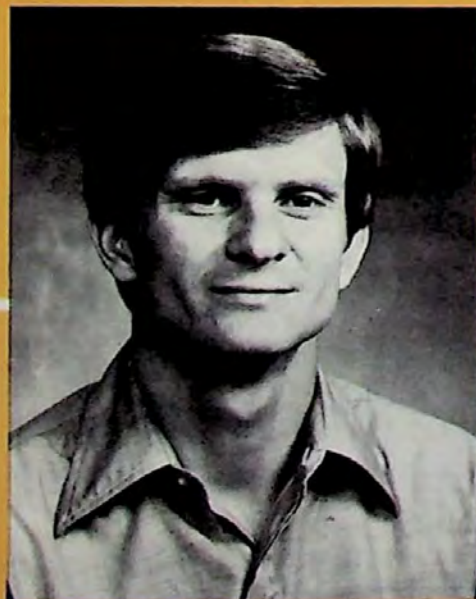
The Leach Swinger, one of the largest selling glass-filled nylon racquets.

The History of Racquetball

SERIES/PART I

This article begins a series in *National Racquetball* magazine on the history of racquetball. The work of Mr. Fancher is from his thesis "A History of Racquetball," written in partial fulfillment for a Master of Science degree in physical education at the University of Wisconsin. Any comments, additions or opinions regarding this paper should be addressed to Mr. Terry Fancher, 234 Randolph Court, #221, Madison, Wisconsin 53717.

Mr. Fancher will be the manager and racquetball pro at *The Court Club* a racquetball/handball facility opening in Madison in December, 1975.



Racquetball was formally organized by Bob Kendler only seven years ago, in 1968, but it is a game that has captured the enthusiasm of physical-fitness minded men and women throughout North America. Foundations of our present-day paddleball and racquetball games may be found more than seven centuries ago.

In an idle moment 700 years ago, two French monks began batting a ball around a monastery courtyard with crude wooden paddles. As a result, this impromptu game, which came to be known as court tennis, gained popularity with royalty and Louis X was so over-extended chasing balls that he became ill and died shortly after a match. Also, the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon were both reported to have played the game.

Today, the game of court tennis, which was the forerunner of lawn tennis, table tennis, squash, badminton and racquetball is extremely complicated. The court itself is a stylized version of the old monastery courtyard, and costs up to \$250,000 to construct. There are only 27 courts in use today (seven in the United States).

While the game of racquetball has its origins in court tennis, it evolved directly from the game of paddleball. Earl Risky of the University of Michigan is credited with being the individual who originated the concept of paddleball in the 1920s. While watching tennis players practice their strokes in a handball court, Risky decided that one could play

a game similar to handball, that would also include the skills of tennis. Paddleball was the result of this idea.

While paddleball is played with a wooden paddle, racquetball is played with a strung racquet the frames of which are made of wood, aluminum alloy, fiberglass or a similar combination of materials. Since its origin, probably in the 1940s through the efforts of Joe Sobek, the popularity of the game of racquetball has spread and surpassed paddleball; players of all ages and both sexes can now be found playing racquetball. The increase in interest, facilities, and the addition of racquetball to the physical education curriculum has done much for the promotion of the sport.

Racquetball is a fast game requiring endurance, skill and body control. It requires the use of nearly all parts of the body. Because of its demands on the cardio-respiratory system it ranks as an excellent conditioning activity. Research indicates that racquetball is an excellent means of providing the stimulus to bring about endurance gains. Racquetball can be a means to help control body weight because of the high caloric expenditure required in the playing of the game. In our sedentary society there is a need for physical activity to relieve the stress and tension of modern life. The fact that

racquetball is a means to relieve this stress makes it an important aspect in the development of good mental health.

What is the appeal of racquetball? The answer is that racquetball makes it possible for a person to enjoy a physical and mental workout without requiring a high degree of skill ability. The game eliminates the pitfalls of a tennis net, yet requires similar stamina necessary for handball. Also, because of the short length of the racquet used in racquetball, the game may be played at an even faster pace than squash. A major advantage of racquetball is that it can be played by men and women, boys and girls—anyone who has a general degree of motor ability.

When it first gained popularity, the game of racquetball was criticized by handball players who resented the game because it occupied time in their handball courts, which were already in great demand. Because of this feeling, racquetball was banned or had restrictive time limits in many private clubs, community centers, and YMCAs, where most handball courts are located. However, the strong appeal of racquetball helped it to endure. By the mid-1960s, the strength of numbers of racquetball supporters and players caused the opposition to accept the game and allowed it to be played more widely.

In recent years the game has made rapid gains in numbers of participants, refinement of rules and equipment, and the establishment of a national organization in spite of a relatively brief history.

Paddleball, Forerunner To Racquetball

The origin of the game of paddleball, the forerunner to racquetball in the United States, is credited to Risky, the first president of the National Paddleball Association. Risky is recognized as founder of the game. As a city recreation director in Ann Arbor, Michigan, he had paddle tennis courts installed and promoted this game for the National Paddle Tennis Association in the 1920s, prior to the beginning of paddleball. Paddle tennis was the modern version of the early game of court tennis and had some of the elements of tennis, only it was played on a smaller, unwallled court and utilized paddles instead of tennis rackets. Early competition was limited to inter-park contests. Following Risky's affiliation with the Department of Physical Education and Athletics at the University of Michigan, the university recreation department installed several paddle tennis courts at the newly completed Sports Building and the activity

became immediately popular with both students and faculty.

Tennis players discovered that they could gain more skill proficiency for their game by using the handball courts, stroking the ball against the wall. Risky found that hitting the paddle tennis ball against the handball walls helped to improve ability in paddle tennis. Members of the physical education staff joined in using the paddle tennis equipment in the handball courts rather than on the unwallled courts normally used for the game. Most already played handball so rules from that game were used; consequently, an intriguing game was developed.

Physical education students at Michigan, many of whom were already varsity athletes, were introduced to the game and often matches between the faculty and students ensued. For a brief time this newly created game was known as "paddle tennis in the court." Printed rules were drawn up at Michigan and the game came to be known as paddleball. Since the University of Michigan also had two one-wall courts in their gymnasium, it was necessary to establish rules for that game as well as for the four-wall game.

Paddle tennis, the forerunner to paddleball, eventually passed out of the athletic picture at the institution, primarily because the gymnasium could be put to better use with other activities. Risky then organized competition for paddleball and the winner was

crowned the All Campus Champion. The first paddleball (wooden paddle) champion was Harvey Bauss, a varsity wrestler and a skilled boxer, who won the title in 1930. A printed chart still hangs by the courts showing the champions since that date.

The game of paddleball was given great impetus during World War II when it was selected as one of the activities in the United States Armed Forces Conditioning Program held at the University of Michigan. Thousands of young men from the different branches of the military service were first introduced to the game and it gained great support. They carried the game back to other military and non-military training sites where others learned to play. At the conclusion of World War II, the returning servicemen took the game to their local areas throughout the United States and Canada.

The first national paddleball tournament was held in Madison, Wisconsin in December, 1961, with Paul Nelson of Madison winning the singles title. These national tournaments have continued annually since that first tournament. A permanent organization was established in 1962 with a board of directors, officers, and committees. Risky was honored by being elected President.

The U.S.H.A. Era

Apparently, the first mention of paddleball (wooden paddle) in *ACE*, the Official Voice of Handball (now *Handball* magazine), was in the December, 1966 issue which was probably the first official recognition of the paddle sport by the United States Handball Association. Mention was made of the need for organization and management of paddleball. Just two years later, paddle rackets (strung racquet) as it was then known, began to appear regularly in bi-monthly issues of *ACE*.

Robert W. Kendler, President of the United States Handball Association, travelled around the country for the promotion of handball and found that paddleball was frequently played in the handball courts. Athletic directors of the various clubs often apologized for this and explained that the game was limited to certain hours. Many of them felt that paddleball would eventually lead to the demise of handball. Kendler felt that this was not true and, in his opinion, both paddleball and handball were growing and prospering. Kendler decided that simply because paddleball was played on handball courts, did not make it detrimental to the future of handball. Actually, it was beneficial for players since paddleball was being played by older players who could either give up the game of handball or add ten years to their participation in sports by continuing with paddleball.

Kendler realized the need for new rules and equipment. Moderation in both sports was needed to lessen bodily damage such as sore arms in handball and head injuries caused by blows with the paddle which were common at that time. New rules would help to curb the damage to arms and heads while new racquets would stop the damage to the walls as well.

Kendler felt that paddleball (paddle rackets) needed organization and management by the players, and with sound direction it could become a welcome partner in the overall handball program. Handball had once been the "orphan" when Kendler had severed relations with the Amateur Athletic Union to form the United States Handball Association. Paddleball was now the orphan as handball had been. Kendler requested the handball membership to inform the headquarters as to their feelings concerning this idea.

Should there be an organization and promotion for paddleball along with national tournaments and inclusion of its news in *ACE* on a monthly basis? Letters poured into the USHA office from all across the nation and many were printed in *ACE* in the February and April, 1967 issues. Replies were almost entirely favorable in support of incorporating a paddleball section

in *ACE*, a magazine previously devoted wholly to handball. It was Kendler's judgment that the time was right to incorporate paddleball in the organization of the USHA; this was also advised by some of the best handball players in the East, who played both handball and paddleball.

Letters supporting the game of paddleball published in *ACE* came from professional YMCA physical directors, Jewish Community Center directors, physical educators, as well as interested proponents of the game. Paddleball was noted as a fine sport for all-around physical fitness; it also gave the handball player an opportunity of playing a sport employing very much the same rules. Supporters of the game believed that the sport of paddleball was well established and it should be given its proper place. A handball advocate suggested that the USHA could be a contributor to the sports scene by taking a leadership role for paddleball. Still others felt that it was the responsibility of *ACE* to help promote the sports of paddleball and paddle rackets until they both became self-sustaining; a national tournament for both sports was suggested. The following reasons, based on YMCA experience, were given for the need for paddleball:

1. Men who have never played handball or a comparable four-wall game would find the game enjoyable.
2. Business and professional men

who needed to protect their hands could do so playing paddleball as opposed to playing handball.

3. Youngsters starting four-wall activity could be given an early start on a lifetime sports skill.

Physical educators indicated that paddleball was an excellent sport from their point of view and fulfilled the physical needs of many individuals who might not otherwise be able to get vigorous exercise. The writers contended that coaches, physical educators, and handball enthusiasts should be cognizant of the good and bad aspects concerning paddleball and apply them so that both sports could benefit. It was further stressed that there was a choice of two directions to follow. First, the USHA members could degrade the sport of paddleball to their own detriment, or, second, they could support the game and in the long run be helpful to the entire physical fitness picture.

Not all of the members who wrote replies to *ACE* were in favor of paddleball. Some voted against the admission of paddleball and its players into the USHA and felt that if this was done it would be a serious mistake. Their argument simply stated that it was not fair for paddleball players to use handball facilities just as it would be wrong for handball players to use squash courts or visa-versa. Other writers expressed their opinion that the association would have all it could

do to supervise handball, without having to expand or develop new sports within its organization. The following additional problems were noted:

1. Not enough courts.
2. Courts were not constructed properly to withstand contact of the paddle on the court.
3. Lack of national, local and regional recognition.

Mort Leve, editor of *ACE*, reported in the February, 1967 edition that it appeared from the overwhelming positive attitude of the USHA membership toward paddleball that action should be taken. The intention of the national headquarters was to study the situation and compile a complete report for the members at the national convention, April 4, 1967, during the National Handball Championships at the Olympic Club in San Francisco.

The stand of the USHA was that support should be given to the paddle racket game rather than paddleball, since this version had gained more popularity and was played almost exclusively in the four-wall courts. In the New York

City area, through the efforts of the United States Paddleball Association (limited to New York City) paddleball had gained great popularity, and the Association had been headquartered there since 1961. The appeal of the game in New York stemmed from the accessibility of the courts in public parks and beach clubs, the minimal cost of equipment, and the natural fascination of a sport requiring agility, speed, and coordination. Yet the game did not require a great deal of strength or endurance, which was largely responsible for its appeal to the very young and to women and older men.

Next issue: the origins of racquetball and the first national tournament.

LINESMAN

The National Racquetball Club's pro-am tour will incorporate the use of linesmen in all professional quarter-final, semi-final and championship matches this season. This added dimension will enable players to appeal certain calls or situations where, in their opinion, an erroneous call was made by the referee.

One of the major problems in racquetball over the past seven years has been inconsistent refereeing. In top flight pro play even more pressure is on the referee to make the correct calls. The use of linesmen will take some of that pressure off the referee and enable the player to have a course to follow in case of a poor call.

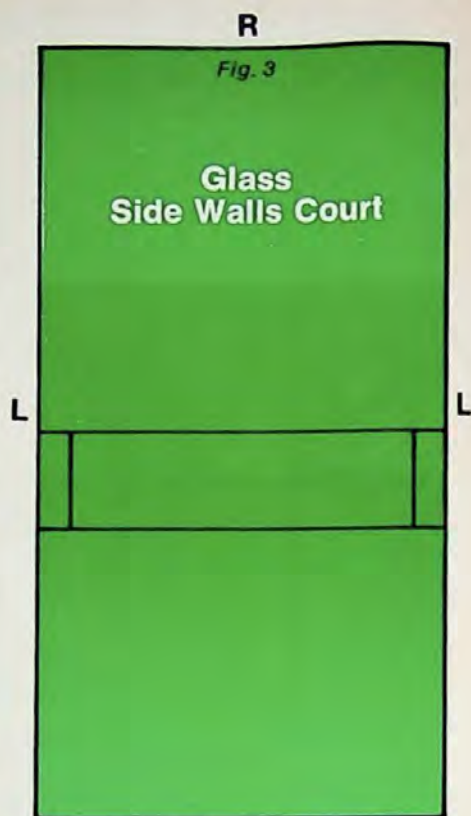
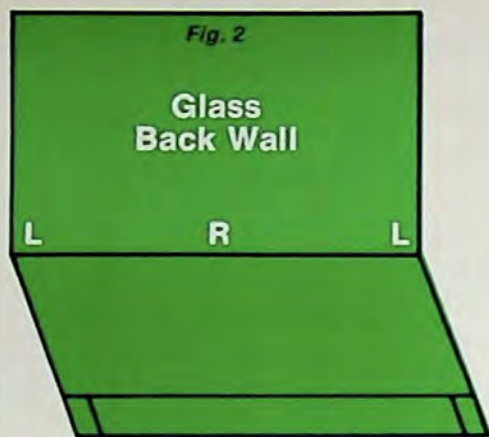
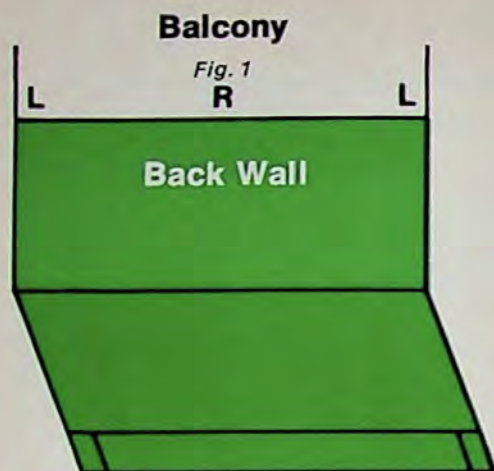
To this point a player has been at the mercy of the referee's eyes and judgment and his opponent's honesty and sportsmanship. Situations have arisen that have led

to arguing between players and refs, and between the two players about shorts, skips and double bounces.

The use of linesmen, we feel, will eliminate a great deal of this time-consuming bickering. When first utilized in racquetball in the National Championships in Las Vegas, linesmen did a great job in helping the referee control the match and at the same time making the outcome as fair and impartial as possible.

We urge all tournament hosts to consider the use of linesmen in their tournaments. It can be done without hindering the referee's authority, and it will make for smoother, more enjoyable racquetball, for players, referees and spectators.

Position of the linesmen. Where the linesmen station themselves will depend on the type of court on



which the match is being played. In all cases the linesmen should have vantage points as different from the referee and each other as possible. There should be two linesmen, plus one referee.

On a standard racquetball court with no glass, only the regular balcony viewing, the referee should be centered equal distant from the side walls. Each of the linesmen should be at one of the side walls. *Fig. 1*

On a court with a glass back wall, the same holds true, with the referee in the center and the linesmen at the sides. *Fig. 2*

On a court with glass side walls, the linesmen should be stationed at or just behind the short line on opposite sides of the court. The referee would be centered behind the back wall if it's glass or upstairs if it's balcony viewing. *Fig. 3*

On a court with just one side wall glass the referee again is in the middle of the back wall, one linesman should be at the short line area behind the glass and the other linesman along the same glass side wall at the same level as the referee. *Fig. 4*

Duties of the linesmen. Linesmen may not initiate any call at any time. They are there to give an opinion if the referee cannot make a call or if a referee's call is appealed by a player. Once an appeal is made the referee then must check the linesmen for that opinion. Again, linesmen cannot offer their opinion unless specifically requested by the referee.

If the linesman agrees with the referee's call, he says nothing,

simply signals "thumbs up." If he disagrees with the referee he signals "thumbs down." If the linesman did not see the play or cannot make a decision for any reason he signals by making a sideways back-and-forth gesture with his hand palm down.

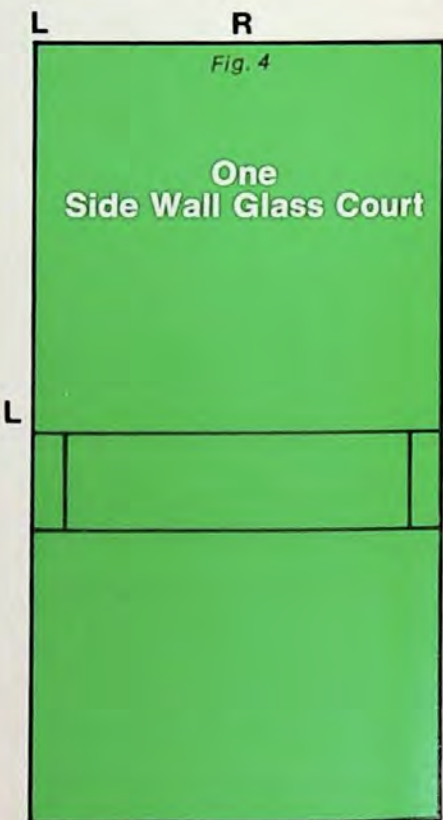
Two out of three makes a decision, so it takes both linesmen to overrule the referee. If one linesman cannot make a call and the other linesman disagrees with the ref, the referee's call shall stand. If the first linesman asked by the referee agrees with him, the ref need not ask the second linesman since a majority has already been established.

How the system works. Let's take an example of just what everybody should do in an appeal situation,—the players, the referee, and the linesmen. Two players are involved in a rally and finally one of them goes for bottom board, hitting an apparent roll out, which was called "good" by the referee. His opponent, feeling the ball skipped, simply turns to the referee and says "I appeal."

The referee then announces to the linesmen and gallery, "The call is being appealed," and immediately turns to one of the linesmen (it should be pre-determined which linesman will be called on first) and says, "May I have your ruling, please?"

The linesman then issues his "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" signal. If it was a "thumbs down" or "no call" then the referee must consult the second linesman in the same manner he did the first.

If the referee is overruled by the linesmen he must announce to the



gallery and the players, "*The referee has been overruled.*" He then makes the appropriate call.

What can be appealed. Only six specific situations can be appealed during a match. Before getting into those situations let's make one thing clear from the outset: hinders, avoidable hinders, and technical fouls cannot be appealed.

The calls that can be are 1) "*skip*" that you as the shooter thought was good; 2) "*kills*" that you as the opponent thought was a skip; 3) "*short*" on a serve that you thought was good; 4) "*no call*" on a serve you thought was short; 5) "*two bounces*" on a shot you feel you got on one bounce; and 6) "*no call*" on a shot you felt your opponent retrieved on two or more bounces.

Result of an upheld appeal. If you make your appeal and that appeal is turned down, then obviously, the referee's call stands. If however, your appeal is upheld then the circumstances become a bit more complicated. Let's take the examples one by one.

You have shot the ball, the referee called "*skip*" and you appealed. Your appeal is upheld by the linesmen. In this case the call is then reversed and your shot is ruled good. You then are awarded a point or service depending on the situation.

Your opponent shoots the ball and the referee rules it a good shot, but you felt it skipped. You appeal and your appeal is upheld. In this case the call is reversed and the shot called a skip. You then are awarded a point or the serve depending on the situation.

The referee calls "*short*" on a serve you thought was good. You appeal and the linesmen rule that yes, it was a good serve. If the serve, in the opinion of the referee was a clear ace serve, you are then awarded a point. To receive an ace in this situation, your serve must virtually roll out of the crack at the side wall. If there is any doubt at all, the referee cannot award you an ace.

If it was not an ace serve, perhaps a routine drive or lob then you simply are given two serves again.

If your opponent serves a serve that you feel was short, yet no call was made by the referee, you must play out the point. If you win the rally there is no sense appealing the call; however the server can appeal it. If he does and his appeal is upheld then he serves again with one serve coming.

If you lose the above rally then you should appeal the "*no call*." If your appeal is upheld, then the rally is re-played with one serve coming to the server. If he already had one fault, then side would be out if your appeal is upheld.

If you think you reached a shot on one bounce but the referee calls two bounces the rally has ended, so an appeal is easy. If your appeal is upheld the rally must be re-played because there is no way to determine if your opponent could or could not have returned your shot.

If you feel your opponent picks up a shot on two or more bounces, but there is no call by the referee you must continue play. However, since you will want to appeal this particular play after the rally has ended you must in some way signal

the referee and linesmen so they will know which exact play you will be appealing. This is a difficult situation but the only way in which an appeal on this play can be made.

In order to make this appeal you must raise your off hand with two fingers extended for a "*two*" call. The gesture is the same as the "*V*" victory or "*peace*" sign. You will not want to keep your hand upraised very long since you still have to retrieve the shot just hit by your opponent. Just keep it up a second or so in order that the referee and linesmen see it.

Of course, if you win the rally, no appeal is necessary. If you lose the rally you should appeal and the linesmen and ref will know which instance you are referring to. If you win your appeal you win the rally.

How to appeal. Appeals by a player must be made directly to the referee. Any appeal directed to any other person, including a linesman is not an official appeal and will not be recognized. Linesman must not make any call, either by voice or motion at any time, unless specifically requested to do so by the referee. If a player asks the linesman if he thought a particular shot was good or not, the linesman should remain silent with a blank facial expression, or look away.

And there you have it. It's a new policy, but one which can and has worked. Your matches will be smoother running with fewer arguments, making racquetball more enjoyable to both play and watch. Any comments on this article should be addressed to *National Racquetball* magazine.

The purpose of writing this series of articles is to explain to the racquetball world how to handle some of our sport's lesser known rules. So I speak to men and women, tournament players and weekend flailers, juniors through golden masters.

In the following article I will focus on one of racquetball's newer rules, the *Referee's Technical* foul. What constitutes a Referee's Technical? How and when should it be called? What is the penalty for a player committing a Referee's Technical? What should the player have done so as not be assessed with a Referee's Technical?

In Rule 3.5(e) of *Official Racquetball Rules* published by the U.S. Racquetball Association and National Racquetball Club the Referee's Technical is spelled out clearly. The rule reads:

"... The referee is empowered, after giving due warning, to deduct one point from a contestant's or his team's total score when in the referee's sole judgment, the contestant during the course of the match is being overtly and deliberately abusive beyond a point of reason. The warning referred to will be called a Technical Warning and the actual invoking of the penalty is called a Referee's Technical. If after the technical is called against the abusing contestant and the play is not immediately continued within the allotted time provided for under the existing rules, the referee is empowered to forfeit the match in favor of the abusing contestant's opponent or opponents as the case may be. The Referee's Technical

can be invoked by the referee as many times during the course of a match as he deems necessary."

Throughout the past few years I have been to many racquetball tournaments, done a great deal of playing and just as much refereeing. I have seen the best players, the best refs, and the worst of both hundreds of times. I have seen players commit technical foul-type actions and I have seen referees meekly accept such belittling from a player.

Unfortunately, it is often the top players who get away with the most since they are usually more experienced than the referee calling the match. But verbal shenanigans are not the sole territory of the top players, not by a long shot.

There are five main thrusts to the Technical Foul rule, the first being the words "after due warning." Due warning is generally accepted as being the referee's instructing the players prior to the match that he will, indeed, call the Referee's Technical if conditions warrant.

However there are cases where the nature of the play or situation in a match warrant a bit more discretion on the part of the referee.

Therefore, additional warnings can be given during a match. Referees should be careful not to become known as one who will forever give warning, and never make the real call.

The second thrust of the rule is that a point is to be deducted from the offender's score. To answer the unasked question, yes, if a player

has no (zero) points and commits a technical foul, his score becomes minus one. The next point he scores makes his total zero.

The reason points are deducted is simple. The makers of the rule did not want a match or game to be won or lost on a Technical Foul. They wanted the winner to earn his victory, not back into it on a judgment ruling. The Referee's Technical in no way changes the serving order, just the score.

The third area of the Referee's Technical rule is the phrase "in the sole judgment of the referee." And it means what it says—only the referee can invoke the technical foul rule. Not a linesman, not a tournament chairman, not a club owner,—only the referee.

What is "beyond a point of reason?" Well, profanity is most definitely beyond. So too are obscene gestures. Any argument that extends past the 10 second service period could be interpreted also as being beyond a point of reason.

The profanity or arguing need not be directed only at the referee. A player may be guilty of an offense necessitating a referee's technical if he is badgering an opponent, or a spectator.

Now that we know what is in the rule let's take a look at its application. To illustrate this, I have constructed a typical example. This particular match has been extremely hard fought. It's late in the first game and Rodney Rollout is trailing B.B. Backwall by one point 16-17. Rod serves and a great rally ensues.

INSTRUCTIONAL

BILL STEVENS

TECHNICAL

Both players are intent on not making a mistake and so neither is going for the all-time winner when it comes up. In other words, they're afraid to shoot the plum, which makes for an even longer rally.

After rallying up front for a while they go to the ceiling for a rest then it's back to the flails up front. Rodney hits a backhand cross-court to B.B.'s forehand which B.B. pinches wide in the forehand corner. Rodney covers with his backhand and hits it down the line to the backhand corner. B.B. takes the ball off the back wall and hits it in the same spot,—down the line and to the back wall, where Rodney takes it with his backhand and sends it cross-court about four feet high.

The ball comes way off the back wall for B.B.'s favorite shot, the B.B. back wall. B.B. apparently rolls the ball out and collapses in the corner a mixture of relief and ecstasy.

"Skip ball," bellows the referee, "side is out."

B.B. goes wild. He starts by throwing his racquet hard to the hardwood. Stomping his feet and with a look of disgust and anger on his face B.B. really let's the referee have it.

"You bleep-bleep-bleep," he screams, "that ball was good."

The referee then calmly announces "Mr. Backwall, I am assessing you with a Referee's Technical Foul and deducting one point from your score. Mr. Rollout continues the serve, leading 17-16."

That outburst actually cost B.B. two points,—the one he lost on the skipped shot, plus the one from the

technical foul. Even if the referee had made the wrong call, and B.B.'s shot was really a good one, the Referee's Technical should and would stand.

Under no circumstances is profane language or intimidation of the referee like the above acceptable on the court. After this first technical is assessed, the player will usually calm down. If not, another technical should follow immediately. At this point any player with even minute thinking capabilities will close his or her mouth rather quickly.

A majority of the time there will be no problems on the court if the players know that the referee will call Referee's Technical fouls. This is not, however, to imply that a player cannot say anything when a call is disputed.

A player has the right to question a call if he or she feels the referee made a mistake. The referee should use discretion in allowing the player to discuss the call. Play should be continued as soon as possible.

If after the first two Referee's Technicals for abusive language or continuous arguing and delay of the game, the perpetrator does not resume play the match can be forfeited as per rule 3.5e.

Most players are lenient in a situation where yelling or other altercations occur between the two players. The referee should interject here with a statemant like, "The call has been made. You have 10 seconds to serve." If the arguing continues the referee can give both players a technical foul. No referee

should allow continuous badgering of himself by any player. Such conduct is in poor taste, unsportsman(person)like, and immature. There is no place in racquetball for it.

What should B.B. Backwall have done in his situation? He should have retained his composure and calmly inquired of the referee if he was sure of his call. If linesman were being used, an appeal could have been made through the referee. He could have requested that the referee ask the opposing player if he thought the ball was good or not.

For better or worse, the referee's call must stand. There has to be a final authority on making all decisions. That is the referee's job. The opposing sides could not possibly settle all disagreements between themselves,—a referee is needed and must be obeyed. Players have to realize that without referees, tournaments would be a near-impossible task. It is my opinion that referees are due considerably more respect from the players in racquetball.

FOUL

LETTERS

On rule changes...

Dear Chuck:

I have enjoyed all the many comments on the proposed rule changes. The following are some of my thoughts:

1. Make PROTECTIVE EYE WEAR mandatory. I would suggest that we set a future effectiveness date of this new rule so that we can all get used to it. This is surely a more important item than the "secure thong" which we have about our wrist.
2. Keep TWO SERVES. This allows a good player a chance to go for a winner; the poorer player can use the extra margin for error.
3. Keep the THREE BOUNCE RULE but modify it so that the referee may use warnings on accidental bounces but enforce the rule when it becomes bothersome or is used as a "balk".
4. THROWING THE BALL AGAINST THE SIDE WALL. When the referee calls the score, the server has 10 seconds to serve. Before that, the ball isn't in play and the server should be permitted to do most anything he wishes with the ball. After that, "play ball!"
5. NON-FRONT SERVES are unfairly discriminated against. The penalty here is side out. For long, short and three wall serves, we get another try. If we are going to permit two serves, then let's give the server two tries to make good. I recommend the missed ball, non-front serve and the crotch serve all be changed from "out" to "faults".
6. DELIBERATE LONG AND SHORT SERVES are unsportsmanlike conduct, and at the official's discretion, should be called a side out.
7. THE AVOIDABLE HINDER RULE is poorly written. It should be greatly expanded to exclude some philosophy regarding who has what right to be where. Many articles by Chuck Leve and Bud Muehleisen in racquetball magazines are no substitute for clarification of the rules in the rule book. Far too many

tournament players use the term "intentional hinder" interchangeably with "avoidable hinder". An intentional hinder obviously is avoidable, but an avoidable hinder is frequently not intentional.

8. SCORE EVERY POINT. This is definitely worthy of consideration. By this system, Charlie beat Strandemo something like 34-22, 32-22 in Las Vegas. But let me suggest you consider going two steps further by reducing the number of points in a game to 15, but increasing a match to 3 out of 5 games. For club purposes, scoring every point would make the length of a game much more predictable. For tournament purposes, the incredible, grinding, inhuman fatigue factor would be lessened but certainly not eliminated.
9. DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS TO INJURE another player shall, at the discretion of the referee, result in forfeiture of the match. This rule shouldn't be necessary but unfortunately it would be useful.

Fred D. Banfield, M.D.
Rochester, MN

Dear Mr. Leve:

In the March '75 issue of *National Racquetball* you discussed some proposals for rule changes in a very rapidly growing racquetball world. Until tonight I thought I knew the rules for racquetball, but now I am beginning to wonder. The rule in contention is that regarding the crotch serve.

The point in contention is this. During a doubles match a ball was served. The ball hit the front wall, left wall, then the crotch of the right wall and floor. The opposing team classified it as a three wall serve (Rule 4.5 (c)). After a slight argument the ball was re-served. After the game it was discussed again. Also the long serve was discussed. At this time I showed our opponents Rule 4.6(F). Now, my question is this. If a crotch serve on the back wall is a good serve, is the crotch serve on a

three-wall serve any good? It is my contention that it is good. I would like a clarification of the rule because after calling four different clubs in San Diego (Gorham's, Helix, Oceanside, Muehleisen's) the vote was split. Two said it is good, the other two said not good.

I think it would surprise a lot of people one way or the other if you could clarify this rule in writing. *National Racquetball* magazine is read by millions of players both pro and amateur alike, myself being the latter.

Your publication is fantastic. Keep up the good work!

Phillip L. Poisson
San Diego, CA

A three-wall crotch serve, like a crotch serve to the back wall, is good.—ed.

Dear Sirs:

I would like to make some very strong comments about the proposed rule changes that I first heard about in the July issue.

I am extremely opposed to the first two rule changes for much the same reasons that others dislike them. As I also play tennis, I will give parallels to that game which is more established than racquetball. First of all, the second serve is necessary if one wants to go all out for an ace on the first. The second serve in tennis is usually a safer, sure to be in serve as it is in racquetball. If you want to make the game less exciting, eliminate the second serve. Scoring on every point does indeed allow the game to be ruled considerably by luck. I have played in tournaments where this rule was under effect, and lost to people by a point or two who in later tournaments with conventional rules I have beaten 21-1, 21-2. Endurance is the name of the game. If someone can't last more than 15 minutes, they aren't good enough to win.

As in tennis, who cares if somebody bounces the ball more than three

times or throws it against the side wall before the serve? This is recommended in tennis to aid in concentration prior to serving. If some players are psyched out by this action, then more power to the server who can do this.

In conclusion, I would hate to see the game reduced to 15 or 20 minutes of luck from the exciting challenging game it now is. This action would cause may of us to stop entering tournaments.

Karen Riesen
Michigan State University

Dear Sirs:

Score on every rally—wrong! It's a game of conditioning, let's leave it at that. Since there is so much interest in the game build more courts to house tournaments. Your kill shot earned you the serve and that's all you deserve. Next you'll want a bonus point for being the first one to show up for a match.

R. M. Turon
APO New York

Dear Chuck,

I have just finished reading your recent "National Racquetball" publication, and in my opinion, it is the finest issue that you have turned out to date. Congratulations on this first class production.

I am sorry that we didn't get to visit longer while I was at Headquarters, however, you were very helpful in sharing with me some of your publicity articles. Enclosed is one copy that I borrowed from you with the understanding that I would return it.

As soon as my plans for a court club facility down south are more firmed up, I will be back in touch with you. Keep up the good work and best wishes.

Bruce E. Beaman
Greensboro, NC

Dear Bob:

Thank you very much for your kind letter of July 28th in response to my request for information on racquetball activity in your area. Enclosed you will find my application for membership in the USRA and I look forward to meeting you personally in the immediate future. I expect to be establishing residence in the area in about two weeks and I will most definitely stop in your office for some assistance in joining one of the Court Clubs and some help in locating playing partners.

I also look forward to discussing with you building and development activities in the Chicago area and I am very pleased to learn that a fellow developer finds the time to be as active as you are with the USRA. I should note however that real builders play racquetball!

James M. De Francia
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Gentlemen (Mssrs. Kendler, Ardito, and Leve):

Recent notice regarding "SEAMCO" just received and we wanted to congratulate all of you for the manner in which you as the Management Group have handled the relatively recent situation that developed within the Racquetball Group.

In short, honesty and right usually prevails, even though it takes a bit of time. However, there must always be leadership regardless.

More success to you!

D. B. Frampton Organization
D. B. Frampton
Teena Snyder
John Dobbie

Dear Mr. Kendler:

I certainly appreciate your letter. It came during the meeting this morning and helped considerably in my fight to get racquetball inside

on the indoor air conditioned courts. It impressed only, however, the bystanders and did not have any effect on the handball players. I am afraid they used every means available to keep the racquetball players out in the rain. Some have threatened to resign among other things. We, however, did get the use of one court inside and a committee was appointed to "work on the situation." This represents at least a foot in the door, but far less than I had hoped for.

Again, I want to thank you for your help and hope we get a chance to meet some day.

Gordon H. Ira, Jr., M.D.
Jacksonville, FL

Dear Bob and Evie,

Just a note to say thank you for visiting us at Storm Meadows. The pro's were delighted, the students were thrilled, and both Diane and I appreciate the time you spent with us.

I will send you details on the camp at a later date to keep you informed of our progress. The last four weeks are full and are certain to be successful. Handball players double the number of racquetball players, but racquetball I'm sure will catch on in years to come.

Your daughter seems to be very happy in Denver. I hope she will spend some time with us during the racquetball weeks and we can use the help. She is a sharp, hard-working gal!

Please feel free to drop in on us here at Steamboat at any time. Your dedication to the game has helped us a great deal with the camp and I appreciate all the interest and time you have given us.

Thank you and best wishes,

Tim Schliebe
Storm Meadows Athletic Club
Steamboat Springs, Colorado

THE COURT HOUSE

Many athletic facilities have long suffered from a personality disorder, caught in a conflict of extremes . . . of pomp and practicality. On one hand, pomp gained dominance with the growth of sports clubs, taking on the flashy trappings of decor that country clubs traditionally boast. On the other hand, facilities so bland that even the avid racquetball player would "play and run" (pardon the pun) because the atmosphere was unreceptive to post game socializing and relaxation.

Happily, a balance has been achieved at The Court House, Saint Louis' finest new racquetball club. In fact, The Court House provides a spacious, relaxing environment that appeals equally to the most avid racquetball player and the once-a-month socialite player; to men, and especially to women.

In lieu of an ostentatious showplace, The Sachar Corporation, developers of the club, have created a professional, bright, and comfortable racquetball facility. And in doing so, have succeeded in combining style with substance . . . something we strive for in our own homes . . . with the result being a unique new racquetball club that satisfies everyone's purpose . . . with no conflict or confusion.

"Developing The Court House has become a very personal experience," commented Byron Sachar, president of The Sachar Corporation. "I set out to create the finest racquetball facility . . . constructed with the best materials, and smartly decorated. So that

someone just up from a fast game or someone on their way to one, feels at home in the atmosphere we've created. I can't help but feel that when you set out to do something . . . do it right. And with The Court House, we have done just that."

Evidence of the harmony between the rough and tumble world of racquetball and the serene setting at The Court House is found in every corner of the spacious facility. From the bold supergraphics on the walls, to the free, attended child's play area, to the snazzy chairs in the lounge, downstairs to the carpeted exercise areas in each locker room; The Court House caters and pampers you to perfection.

As you enter The Court House the excitement of the game is established in a bright action mural of racquetball in play. Through broad glass doors, past the open pro-shop and reception desk (both well stocked with the regalia for the game), the lofty lounge area expresses another kind of mood. Bright, fresh, comfortable, and serene, the lounge is a constant meeting place (and sometimes sounding block) for players of all capabilities. Fine, internationally designed furniture . . . including plump canvas and chrome chairs, overstuffed deep green velour couch, convenient tables . . . arranged in groupings to become intimate conversation areas for private talks or open up to involve everyone in the lounge. Plus there is a handsome console color TV and a remarkable audio-visual teaching aid that shows instructional films on how to improve your game.

What gives character more than anything else in the lounge is the use of bold supergraphics. Several walls have been transformed into striking displays of color and design. One mural boasts the name of the Club in tangy orange letters running diagonally up the wall. While a second wall makes use of the distinctive Court House symbol, forming a decorative grid pattern in bright orange and red. Each wall adds just the right accent of color to spark the earth tone decor, and to unify the pro-shop, reception desk, and lounge area.

A descent on carpeted stairs leads to the heart of the matter . . . eight regulation, championship quality 20' x 40' courts, built with the finest hardwood maple flooring systems. The walls are solid reinforced plaster. Carefully engineered lighting on court ensures excellent vision and eliminates shadows, glare or poorly-lit areas.

To brighten up the ordinarily institutional look of the corridors between the courts and locker rooms, special signage was created. Bold, fresh, and sharp the numbers on the court doors and directional signs are as informative and functional as they are decorative.

Also downstairs are two spacious locker rooms for men and women, each having showers, saunas, and fully equipped exercise areas. While some Super-jocks may not sit-up (pun intended!) and take notice, there are many racquetball fans

who are interested in the decor throughout the club . . . and the locker room is certainly no exception. Expressing harmonies with the color scheme in the lobby, the locker rooms are bright and accommodating. Glowing orange lockers boast bold white numbers and lock with keys attached to mammoth never-to-be-lost Court House key tags. The combination of the lockers, dangling key tags and numbers all set against a kelly green wall, create a dramatic and decorative . . . avantgarde if you wish . . . backdrop where you least expect it. Other walls are lined with sleek vanities, towering mirrors and special lighting . . . all the better to see yourselves in, my dears. Smokey coal colored wall-to-wall carpeting throughout provides a cushioned base for vigorous warm up athletics; while white mini-tiles on floors and walls in the shower-sink-sauna area adds a crisp, clean, cool effect to finish off the rest of the rooms.

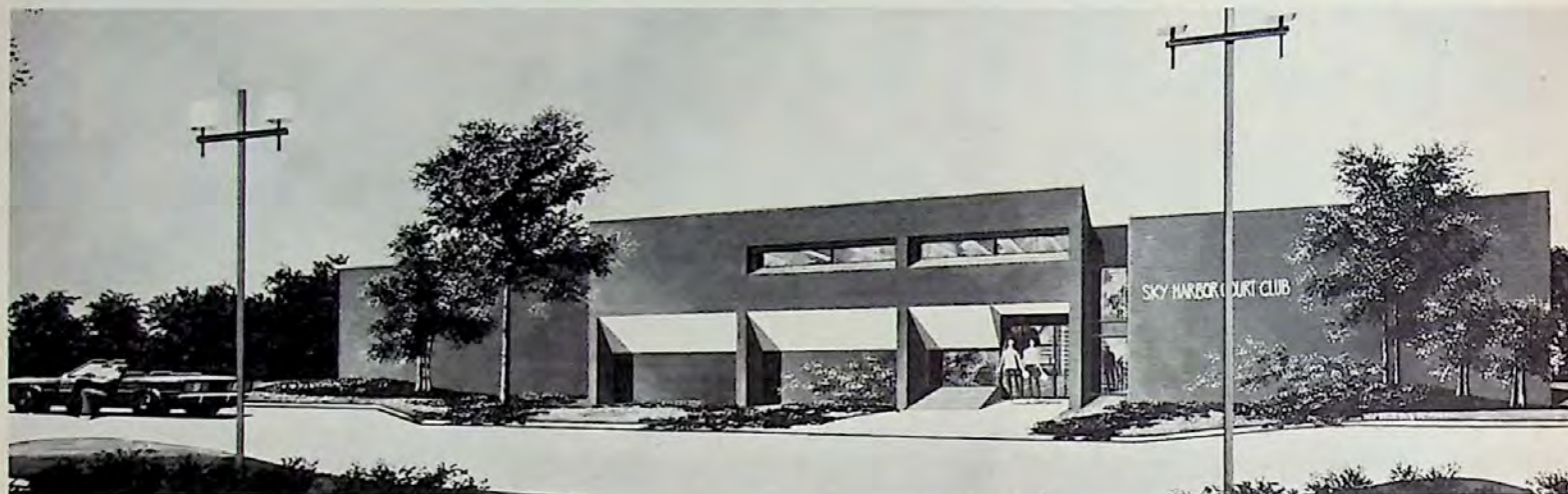
Back upstairs, crowds gather at one of the observation decks to watch The Court House pro Ken Wong beat the pants off an opponent.

Racquetball, the game for all ages as seen above, can now be played at another new court club, The Court House in St. Louis. Open now, The Court House expects plenty of action, by players of all ages.





Artist's rendering of Sky Harbor Court Club, set for fall opening, in Northbrook, Illinois. Sky Harbor is one of five new clubs set to open on or around September 1.



A carefully planned teaching program is drawing new racquetball players to the nine-court SkyHarbor Court Club in Northbrook, Illinois.

Pros Gil Schmitt and Jean Sauser have vowed to produce new racquetball players "who enjoy the game because they learn correct techniques from the beginning. We are teaching methods that make people winners." Sauser said SkyHarbor's instruction for children will be "looser, but still emphasizing basic strokes."

Both Schmitt and Sauser earned bachelors degrees in physical education from the University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse, where they first played racquetball. Both pros have wide experience teaching racquetball and other sports.

Careful planning also has gone into SkyHarbor's plush decor. Designer

Leandra Duran (of SkyHarbor architect Robert Friedman's office) has used "invigorating colors to match the invigorating game of racquetball. I've contrasted the neutral courts with bright colors everywhere else," she said. I've used vivid purple, pink, orange, navy and Kelly green."

Oversized directional signs, painted on the walls like murals, lead players around first floor corridors to courts, dressing rooms, saunas and whirlpool.

In the 2,000 square foot second level lounge, seating is on free-form units, where low plastic tables can be drawn up for backgammon games. Fanning out from the lounge are the supervised nursery done in Kelly and pink, the pro shop, offices, dining and party room (with vending machines) and spectator areas to watch court play.

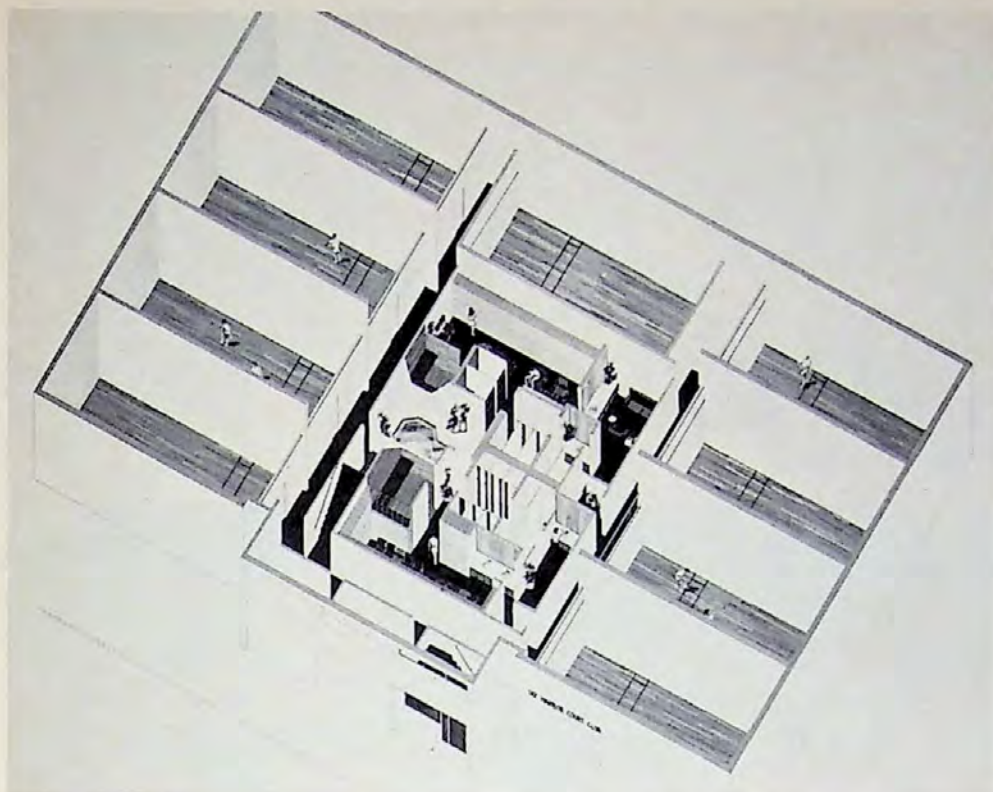
Among other features are air conditioning and climate control throughout the facility, high level

court lighting, individual dressing rooms for women, marble shower stalls and vanities and a private women's lounge.

The new handball-racquetball center is located in SkyHarbor industrial park, west of Pfingsten road, between Dundee and Lake Cook roads.

First year memberships at SkyHarbor run from \$10 for an individual to \$30 for a family. Court time costs \$6 an hour non-prime time and \$8 an hour prime time.

Co-managers of SkyHarbor are Don Snyder and Bernard Weinstein. Robert Friedman, Robert Bernstein, Avery Stone and Joseph Scher are other investors.



Overview of the Sky Harbor Court Club shows the nine courts, locker rooms, dual level, saunas and other amenities. Another top-notch facility for the Chicago area.

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University of Tennessee

Brief, heavy rain muddled the site but not the vision of University of Tennessee at Chattanooga officials and guests for the new \$660,000 tennis, racquetball and handball center during groundbreaking ceremonies.

Individuals slated to participate in groundbreaking activities, as well as spectators, were forced to seek shelter in Maclellan gymnasium and pick up the program in an indoor setting.

"What this means, quite simply, is that the UTC center will be, by a considerable margin, the best tournament facility in the United States," Alex Guerry, president of Chattem Drug Company and a supporter and promoter of tennis, handball and racquetball, said.

He said Chattanoogaans will have an opportunity to watch the best racquetball and handball players in the world compete in tournament play.

Funding for the new indoor center came from the state of Tennessee, the Benwood Foundation and Chattem.

Mr. Guerry stated that the U.S. Racquetball Association has expressed a desire to hold championships here in 1976 if the center is ready for play in March.

The target completion date for the new center is February.

The U.S. Handball Association is seeking to hold the National Intercollegiate Handball championships here next spring.

The new 25,000 square-foot center is to have seven racquetball courts and two tennis courts. One of the racquetball courts will be an exhibition court with glass walls on three sides for spectator viewing.

"The exhibition court will be capable of seating 400 spectators, or more than any other court in the world," Mr. Guerry continued.

Other program participants included Dr. Edward J. Boling, UT System president; Scott

L. Probasco Jr., vice chairman of the board of directors of American National Bank; Chancellor James Drinnon Jr. of UTC and UT Trustees Paul Kinser and Leonard Raulston.

Dr. Boling praised the "work and support" of Mr. Guerry and Mr. Probasco in the planning of the new center as "instrumental."

Mr. Probasco appeared on the program as a representative of the Benwood Foundation, the University of Chattanooga Foundation and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

He also had praise for the UT Board of Trustees and the legislative and administrative units of state government.

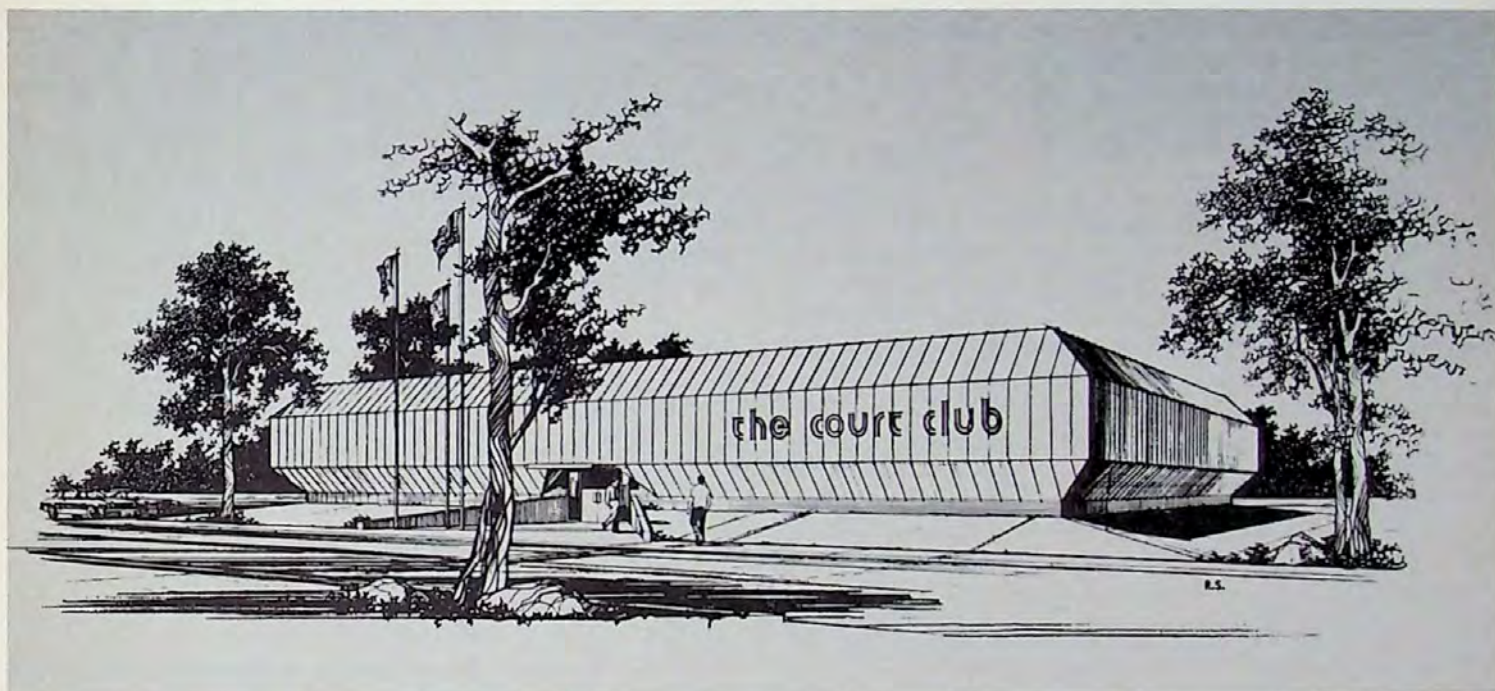
Chancellor Drinnon was more specific in his praise of Mr. Probasco and Mr. Guerry. *"Without them, we could not have done it,"* he said. *"It's as simple as that."*

CENTER NEED EMPHASIZED—Participants in the groundbreaking ceremony for the new indoor tennis and racquetball center at UTC were treated to one reason an indoor facility is needed when a thunderstorm forced the program into Maclellan Gymnasium.

Program participants included, from left, Chappell Guerry, UTC student and tennis player; Scott L. Probasco, Jr., representing the UC Foundation; Alex Guerry, president of Chattem Drug Company; UTC Chancellor James Drinnon, Jr.; President Edward Boling of UT and Leonard Raulston, UT Trustee. (Photo by Robin Hood.)



THE COURT CLUB



Plans for "The Court Club" of Madison, a private sports complex specifically for racquetball and handball play, have been announced by David N. Johnson, Madison developer and one of the club owners.

The 15,000 square foot facility is to be located on Schroeder Road on Madison's west side. It will house eight climate controlled regulation racquetball/handball courts, men's and women's carpeted locker

rooms, saunas, exercise rooms and whirlpool baths. Other features will be a complete pro shop, a free supervised child care center, and a lounge/observation area with food and beverage service.

Completion is scheduled for January of 1976. The Pro/Manager will be Terry Fancher, current Madison singles and doubles champion. Terry holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Physical Education from the University of Wisconsin.

COURT CLUBS



Allen E. Fishman (r.), Executive Vice President of Tipton Electric Company, shoots for the left, front corner against Syl Kaplan, President of the firm. The court on which they're playing is within the offices of Tipton and matches involving employees have greatly added to the upward swing in morale at the company.

In the business world, there is hardly anything worse than an overweight secretary, even if she can type 80 words a minute and fix a cup of coffee like Mrs. Olsen. Think of office morale! When sales are down and profits are lagging, a guy needs something to make his job bearable. Piped in music just doesn't hack it.

Unfortunately, not many executives recognize this basic need in their male chauvinist employees. As a result, about the only time a secretary gets any exercise at work is when she's chased down the hall by the local wolfpack during the office Christmas party.

Going on the presumption that the girls like to look too, it must be said that office physical fitness programs shouldn't be devised only to make your secretary trim enough to sit on your lap during dictation. Both men and women should be encouraged to push something other than pencils.

It is pleasant to report that at least one company in St. Louis is keeping its employees in better shape than the economy. At Tipton Electric Co., it is not uncommon to see half-naked men stalking the halls in search of a racquetball partner, and an executive wouldn't find it unusual to locate his missing secretary tugging on a weighted pulley in the exercise room.

Tipton has enough facilities at its main plant to keep its employees physically fit year-round. Aside from one of the best racquetball courts in the area and exercise rooms stocked with equipment, Tipton also keeps its personnel busy with ping-pong, softball and sauna baths.

The program at Tipton is the brainchild of the appliance store's president, Syl Kaplan. A few years ago, Kaplan visited Japan and noticed that factory workers were producing transistor radios at record rates after being permitted to exercise a couple of times a day.

"They did calisthenics and it broke the monotony," Kaplan said. "As a result, they are more efficient on the job."

Kaplan's concern toward his employees is probably a reflection on how he runs his business. Three years ago, Tipton had 32 employees and four stores. Now there are 200 people working in 10 stores.

"We feel that our physical fitness program helps develop a company spirit," said vice president Allen Fishman. "And it's doing it. No question about it. There's a difference between seeing someone at a business meeting and playing racquetball with him. You're meeting at a different level. It's informal, and pretty soon you have a friendly relationship going."

When the 5 o'clock whistle blows, Tipton's employees don't all head for their cars. Some of them stay around to work out, blowing off steam on the court rather than Interstate 70. And nothing would warm the proletariat's heart more than having the mailroom boy beat the company president in racquetball.

"They'd love to beat me," Kaplan said. "And I'll play anybody who wants to play. When some of those 23-year-old kids get a little experience, they're going to murder me."

It just may be possible for labor and management to like each other because of a program like Tipton's.

"I played one of our assistant store managers in St. Charles," Fishman said. "He was out to beat my pants off, and we had a lot of fun. But I got to know him a lot better, and he gained an insight into what I'm like."

The recently completed court has been an asset to Tipton in ways Fishman never really counted on.

"Three different business deals have been developed after we played racquetball with executives from other companies," Fishman said.

But how about those secretaries? Are they shaping up?

"The girls use the exercise room more than the men," Fishman said. Morale must be up, too.



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FOURTH SEMINAR MEETING REPORT

Held at Stapleton Plaza Motor Hotel, Denver

June 20-22, 1975

Includes reports from:

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Bruce Hendin, San Antonio Racquet Club
- Developing Court Clubs . . . costs involved.
Rick Schliebe, Montebello Sporting House, Denver.
- Cardio-vascular program.
John Gillingham, Stapleton Plaza Athletic Center, Denver.
- Credit cards, financing.
Les Shumate, Aurora, Colorado, National Bank.
- Starting from scratch.
Carl Porter/Gene Decker, Tucson Athletic Club.
- Use of BlocBond, interior design with glass.
Charlie Hubbard, Burlington, Vermont, Court Club.
- Robbins Flooring Co.
George Pitzer, Memphis.
- Instructional Camps — A Step in the Right Direction.
Tim Schliebe, Storm Meadows A.C., Steamboat Springs, Colo.
- Pro Shop purchasing, inventory.
Dan Callahan, Bellingham, Wash.

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Enclosed find () \$25 for official Court Club membership. () \$10 individual membership. () \$10 Products manufacturer for Court Sports. This fee will include both 1975 membership with all literature coming out of the NCCA headquarters, and the official booklet covering the fourth seminar-meeting, June 20-22 in Denver.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

TOUR SITES AND DATES

The National Racquetball Club's 1965-76 Pro-Am tour is set and organized similar to last year's tour, with eight professional tournaments during the season. The first seven money events will take the tour through April, and May will bring the National Championships, a combination of pro and amateur.

Sites and dates of the September through March portion of the tour can be easily seen on the accompanying tournament schedule. Many of the April regionals are set, and the National Championships are still being negotiated. Final details, including sites and dates of the regionals and Nationals will be published in the November issue of *National Racquetball*.

Players and readers will find some of this year's host familiar names and places, intermingled with some dynamic new clubs and cities, eager to showcase the world's top racquetball competitors.

We begin the season September 25-28 in one of the fastest-rising racquetball cities, Denver, Colorado. There the glorious Denver Athletic Club will be our host, kicking off the pro-am season in a big way.

The D.A.C. has shown their appreciation by also donating \$750 in prize money for the Ladies pro-am bracket,—this is addition to the \$5,000 men's pro-am tournament.

"We are really looking forward to this tournament," said Monte Huber, athletic director at the D.A.C.

"Our members were treated to pro handball last year, and they're craving to see pro racquetball now."

The Denver pro-am will have two brackets of play, pro-am singles and pro-am Ladies singles. Any amateur is eligible for the tournament, and if he or she can do it, need not accept prize money.

"The reason for having only the two brackets," said Huber, "is to give any player who so desires, a shot at all the top pros. There are many players around here who would like to go in and see what

they can do against a Brumfield, Keeley or Serot."

October brings the tour all the way to the other end of the nation, to one of the brand-spanking new clubs, The Court Club in Burlington, Vermont. This will be the first true chance for Northeasterners to see the pros play since the inception of pro racquetball by the N.R.C. two years ago.

"We don't get much of a chance to see top players from across the country," said John Kruger, manager of The Court Club. "The excitement here is unbelievable."

The Vermont tournament, officially named the New England Open, will be October 23-26 and will have a number of amateur brackets in addition to the pro-am men's singles. Included are Amateur open singles, Ladies singles and Senior singles, for men 35 and over.

"We want to get as many people involved as we can," said Kruger.

"We know that many of these players will not only want to watch the pros, but also play some too."

After a November rest to digest our huge Thanksgiving meal the tour resumes December 11-14 for the Tucson, Arizona Pro-Am, at the luxurious Tucson Athletic Club.

Here again, details such as definite brackets of play are still in the works, but Carl Porter, manager of the Tucson club, assures us there will be plenty of room for amateurs.

"Our club is going to be jumping with plenty of racquetball action," said Porter. "Handball's been pretty strong here, but our racquetballers are asking for equal time. We think they'll get more than that with the pro-am tour."

The first of the year brings us to an old friend, the Aurora Y.M.C.A. in Aurora, Illinois. Dates for the Aurora Pro-Am Open are January 22-25, and Jim Stotz, physical director of the Aurora Y, is again our main man.

"The tournament went well for us last year," said Stotz. "And I think we can do even better this year."

Crowds were good last year, but not capacity in the 500-plus gallery at Aurora's glass court. This year, the tournament has been scheduled after the pro football season, a factor Stotz feels is important.

"The Chicago area is a football town," said Jim. "And we really don't want to buck football and television either Saturday or Sunday. Those will be the tournament's best matches and we want everybody to be able to see them as easily as possible."

Stotz does not anticipate any changes in the format from last year, where there was a pro-am singles, Ladies pro-am singles and Amateur open singles.

"We're quite happy with that arrangement," he said. "The tournament is big, but not too big to handle. We may add a seniors singles this time around, but we haven't made a decision on that yet."

February brings the tour 120 miles to the north of Aurora, as we visit another old friend, the Wisconsin Athletic Club, formerly the Milwaukee Handball/Racquetball Club. Dates for the Milwaukee tournament are February 26-29.

"Two straight years of success, you can't beat that," said club co-manager Rod Lanser. "We always enjoy the players, and we think they enjoy playing here."

The format for Milwaukee is still being worked out; however, there will most likely be few, if any, changes in it. That will mean a pro-am singles, Amateur open singles and Ladies open.

And as always, we look forward to full galleries and great play in Milwaukee.

March 25-28 are the dates for the last pro-am tournament prior to the Nationals, this one being in Miami, Florida. A new club, currently under

construction, will be ready in plenty of time.

"We'll be ready, no question about it," said Ed Torkell, one of the key men in the Miami club. "This area is dying to see the pros."

Miami, long acknowledged as one of the ripest cities in the nation for a court club, will now have one, and one that will be perfect for players and spectators alike.

"We don't think there will be a complaint by anyone," said Torkell. "This is going to be a first class facility and we know, a first class tournament."

The pros will take a slight sabbatical after Miami, as the amateurs regain the spotlight, with the U.S.R.A. regional tournaments. Not all are officially set yet; however, we anticipate 10 regionals in the United States and Canada.

"Right now it looks like we'll have

one in Minneapolis," said U.S.R.A. National Director Chuck Leve, "one in San Diego and another one in Montreal. We're still talking with hosts to line up the other sites. The dates for all the regionals will be April 22-25, the week after Easter."

Full details on the regionals will be included in the November issue of *National Racquetball*.

The final pre-nationals event will be "The Tournament of Champions" at Courtside, a private court club in Peoria, Illinois, April 29-May 2. The Tournament of Champions will pit the top eight money winners on the N.R.C.'s pro tour against each other. Only the top eight will be invited and money-winning standings will be kept up-to-date in each issue of *National Racquetball*.

Mike Hart, our contact in Peoria, is looking forward to a beauty of a tournament.

"We want to make this tournament an annual affair," he said. "And prestigious, like the Masters in golf. We don't mean to take any luster off the nationals, and I don't think we will."

The specific format of the tournament will be announced in later issues of *National Racquetball*.

As for the National Championships, a definite site has not been established as yet, although we are seriously considering returning to Las Vegas and the Tropicana Hotel.

"We learned an awful lot there last year," said Leve. "And we'd like to go back and do a real super job. However, it will be tough with only the five courts at the Tropicana and we're not too excited about using two different facilities. A decision will be made shortly, though, and passed along to everyone in our next issue."

1975-76 U.S.R.A.-N.R.C. Tournament Schedule

Date	Event	Site	City
Aug. 29-Sept. 1	National 3-Wall	Lucas County Recreation Ctr.	Maumee, OH
September 19-21	Midwest Amateur Invitational	The Court House	Schaumburg, IL
September 25-28	Denver Pro-Am	Denver Athletic Club	Denver, CO
October 23-26	Vermont Pro-Am Open	The Court Club	S. Burlington, VT
December 11-14	Tucson Pro-Am	Tucson Athletic Club	Tucson, AZ
December 26-30	National Juniors	Orlando Y.M.C.A.	Orlando, FL
January 22-25	Aurora Pro-Am	Aurora Y.M.C.A.	Aurora, IL
February 26-29	Milwaukee Pro-Am	Wisconsin Athletic Club	Wauwatosa, WI
March 25-28	Miami Pro-Am Open	Miami Court Club	Miami Lakes, FL
April 22-25	U.S.R.A. Regionals	Undetermined	Undetermined
April 29-May 2	"Tournament of Champions"	Courtside	Peoria, IL

Site and dates of the National Championships will be printed in this calendar in the next issue of *National Racquetball*. If you want your tournament listed in the calendar, please contact the U.S. Racquetball Association, 4101 Dempster Street, Skokie, IL 60076.

UPCOMING EVENTS

COURT HOUSE CLASSIC

The first annual Court House Classic will be held September 12-14, 1975 at the Court House Sports Club in Creve Coeur, Missouri.

The tournament is open to all racquetball players. For men the following events will be held: Open, Class B, Class C, and Seniors (35 and over). For women the following

events will be held: Open Division, and Class C. A consolation tournament will be held for all first round losers so that everyone will play at least two matches.

More information can be obtained by writing: Ken Wong, The Court House, 11628 Old Ballas Rd., Creve Coeur, MO 63141.



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PROFESSIONALISM

Many people have written or called the U.S.R.A. to obtain a definition of an amateur and a professional racquetball player, and what the U.S.R.A.'s tournament policy toward them is.

The U.S.R.A. considers any player who has accepted \$200 or more in prizes and/or prize money in the past 12 calendar months to be a professional. No professionals will be eligible for U.S.R.A. tournaments or U.S.R.A. sanctioned brackets in pro-am events.

In order to retain his or her amateur standing, a player may refuse to accept prizes or prize money, or donate such prize(s) to a recognized charity.

"The reason we made the cut-off at \$200," said U.S.R.A. National Commissioner Joe Ardito, "was to allow some cushion against expenses. After all, if a player spends \$100 in travel, food and lodging to get to a tournament, and only wins \$50, we can hardly say he made a living at that tournament."

The tournament interpretation is simple. In an all-U.S.R.A. event, like the regionals, only amateurs are eligible. In a combined pro-am, like all of the N.R.C.'s tour stops, pros and amateurs alike are eligible for the pro bracket only. Pros cannot play both pro and amateur, although amateurs can.

Any questions regarding this information should be sent to Joe Ardito, National Commissioner, U.S.R.A., 4101 Dempster St., Skokie, IL 60076.

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BALL	Seamco Green 559
ENTRY FEE	\$25.00 Check must accompany entry blank. Make check payable to D.A.C. Pro-Racquetball, entry fee includes standing room tickets.
ENTRY DEADLINE	12:00 Noon September 12th
SCHEDULE	Starting times will be available Thursday September 18th, you may call the D.A.C. Athletic Department (303-543-1211 ext. 33) for information. The D.A.C. will mail all entrants a copy of the format. Due to the possibility of a large number of entries, local participants may have to begin play Monday, September 22.
TICKET INFORMATION	D.A.C. Membership will have first preference. Ticket sales to the general public will be available September 1st. Call (303-534-1211 ext. 33) for ticket information.

MAIL ENTRY TO: Monte Huber
Director of Athletics
The Denver Athletic Club
P.O. Box 988
Denver, Colorado 80204

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Business Phone _____

D.A.C. No. if applies _____

Check Division Mens. _____ Womens _____

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national juniors



"A fun time is guaranteed for all."

Those were the words used by U.S.R.A. National Director Chuck Leve as he described plans for the first annual National Juniors Championships, a separate, distinct tournament for boys and girls 18 and under.

The National Juniors is now confirmed for December 26-December 30, 1975 at the Orlando, Florida Y.M.C.A. And although the Orlando Y has only two courts, all parties are certain that the tournament can be run off during this time period.

"There are an abundance of reasons why we're beginning a National Juniors tournament," said Leve. "The most important is that we feel the juniors deserve a major event of their own."

Some of the peripheral aspects to the tournament should create a great amount of excitement, the major one being a tour of world-famous Disney World, only 20 minutes from Orlando.

"There will be no problem in organizing the trip," said physical director Bill Dunsworth of the Y.M.C.A. *"I imagine we'll take one day out of the tournament and spend it at Disney."*

The tournament will have three brackets of play: Boys 18 and under, Boys and Girls 15 and under, and Girls 18 and under. All play will be singles only and there will be consolation in all brackets.

"We feel that all the kids should have a good time first," said Leve. *"And they should also be able to play a lot of racquetball."*

The scheduled dates are perfect for a National Juniors tournament, as the calendar has co-operated perfectly with tournament organizers.

"It's most important to have this tournament at a time of the year when the maximum number of junior players can participate," said Leve. *"And not only is the Holiday vacation period perfect, we're happy that we have been able to set it up in a warm-weather climate."*

The tournament will be open to amateur juniors only, since it is being sanctioned by the U.S.R.A. This should have little impact on the

tournament since only one or two pro players are of junior age.

"There's no way we want to spoil the atmosphere of fun and play by allowing professionalism into the juniors arena," said Leve. *"This will be a relaxed tournament with emphasis on camaraderie and competition, not who has won more prize money."*

Arrangements are currently being made to make this tourney even more attractive to the young players. All housing and meals will be provided for the participants, as well as the usual souvenir t-shirts. The entry fee is a nominal \$10 per player.

The U.S.R.A. is also negotiating with a large, national firm in the effort to procure funds to help each player make the long trip to Florida. Nothing definite has been agreed upon, but if all goes well, a travel allowance will be given for any player traveling over 500 miles to reach the tourney.

"Our major goal is to be able to give the kids some money to help them reach Orlando," said Leve. *"Once they get there, we see little problem with their finances."*

The U.S.R.A. will provide chaperones for the boys and girls, while the Orlando Y.M.C.A. will provide the manpower necessary to run this tournament smoothly. The Seamco 558 black racquetball will be the tourney's official ball.

Entrants are encouraged to make early travel arrangements if they intend to participate. The Christmas-time season in Orlando (those flying should fly into Orlando's McCoy Jetport) is a crowded one, and the sooner the U.S.R.A. has an indication of how many players there will be, the easier planning the event will be.

"The last thing we want are players who want to go, but can't get the necessary airplane flights," said Leve. *"So we urge all players and their families who are coming to make travel plans early."*

Participants should use the convenient entry form on the opposite page, or write: U.S.R.A. National Juniors, 4101 Dempster St., Skokie, IL 60076.

Official Entry U.S.R.A.-JUNIORS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

SITE: Orlando (Fla.) YMCA

DATES: December 26-30, 1975

ENTRY FEE: \$10 per person.

SANCTION: By the U. S. Racquetball Assn. (U. S. R. A.).

OFFICIAL BALL: Seamco 558

RULES: U. S. R. A. — N. R. C. rules and regulations apply.

TROPHIES: To first four places in each event. First place in consolation.

ENTRY DEADLINE: In our possession by 6 p. m. December 15, 1975. Prescribed fee must accompany signed entry form. Entries received after the deadline or unsigned, or without the fee will not be accepted.

MAIL ENTRIES: Bill Dunsworth
YMCA — 433 N. Mills
Orlando, FL 32803
Check must accompany signed entry form.

Please enter me in:

Girls 18 & under ()

Boys 18 & under ()

Boys and Girls 15 & under ()

Consolation in all events.

NAME _____ AGE _____ CLUB _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

I hereby, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages I may have against the U.S. Racquetball Assn. or Orlando YMCA, their respective agents, or any facility used for this tournament, for any and all injuries which may be suffered by me in connection with my competition in said tournament.

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BURLINGTON, VERMONT

OCTOBER, 23-26, 1975

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Facilities: 7 regulation, indoor, 4-wall courts.

Dates: October 23-26, 1975.

Entry Fee: \$12 per person in amateur events; \$20 per person in pro event.

Sanction: By the U.S. Racquetball Association and National Racquetball Club.

Official Ball: In all amateur events: Seamco 558 (black). In all professional events: Seamco 559 (green).

Rules: U.S.R.A. and N.R.C. rules and regulations apply. If two events entered, players may have back to back matches. No player having accepted \$200 or more in prize money within the past 12 months may enter amateur events.

Trophies: To first four places in amateur event. First two places in consolation. \$5,000 prize money in Men's Pro Singles.

Entry Deadline: In our possession by midnight, Tuesday October 14, 1975. Prescribed fee must accompany entry form. Entries received after the deadline or without fee will not be accepted.

Mail Entries: John Kruger, The Court Club, 70 Farrell Road, South Burlington, Vermont 05401.

Make Checks Payable To: The Court Club.

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Please enter me in: ☐ Pro Singles ☐ Amateur Open Singles
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TOURNAMENT RESULTS

too
bad
it wasn't
for
\$\$\$

An All-Star cast showed up in Schaumburg, Illinois for The Court House Summer Racquetball Open. As the entry deadline grew near names such as Steve Serot, Steve Keeley, Mike Zeitman, Rich Wagner, Davey Bledsoe, Ken Wong, Marty Hogan, Joe Wirkus, and Jeff Bowman had entered making the Men's Open bracket look like a regular mid-season tour stop.

"There just aren't that many tournaments during the summer," said Serot. "And we all want to keep our game sharp."

Their games were definitely sharp, as the pros showed just why they are the world's best. Spectators and other players were amazed at the performances given by these players, especially since there was no prize money in this event, sponsored by the AMF-Voit company.

So, which of those bullet-hitting competitors took the top spot? You'd never guess it, but the winner was Rich Wagner, the San Diego student, currently working for the summer at the Schaumburg Court House. Wagner topped St. Louis' Rudi Losche in the round of 16, defeated Marty Hogan in the quarter-finals, topped Serot in the semi's and beat Keeley in the finals. Anybody who can do that, deserves to be called the tournament champion.

The tournament also included Seniors, Masters, and Ladies Open. Jerry Davis, all the way from Cleveland, took the Seniors title coming through a difficult bottom bracket to defeat Fred Blaess in the finals 18-21, 21-11, 21-14. Blaess gave it a good effort in front of his home club fans.

Dr. Phil Dziuk, Champaign, Illinois had little trouble taking the Masters crown with a 21-7, 21-10 win over Al Hanke, Elmhurst. Hanke's 10 points were the most tallied against Dziuk during the entire tournament.

In the Ladies Open the finals matched again the two best in Illinois, Sue Carow and Jean Sauser. Sauser had gained some measure of revenge in her semi-final win over Minnesota's Ev Dillin, but just didn't have enough to stop Carow, who was really on her game this day. Actually, it was Carow in a waltz 21-9, 21-11.

Dillin took third place over teammate Barb Tenneson, who took Carow to three games in the semi-finals 21-6, 20-21, 21-9. The Sauser-Dillin semi also was a three-gamer with Jean coming out on top 12-21, 21-12, 21-13. It was Dillin who ousted Sauser from the Milwaukee pro-am last March.

"I felt good about this win," said Jean. "I had to think to beat her. Ev's a fine player."

Wagner waits for a forehand "plum" off the back wall in his upset win over Keeley. Gauging by the percentages of the match, Wagner probably rolled it out.



Expected close battles in the quarters didn't materialize as Carow topped St. Louis' Goldie Hogan, Tennesson beat Bev Franks, Sauser defeated Teri Davis and Dillin eased by Nancy Zelson.

Chicago's Nancy Kronenfeld took the consolation title over Sue Loomis 21-13, 21-20.

Back in the Men's Open bracket things were going pretty much as expected, in fact all 16 seeds made it to their expected round. This produced some interesting match-ups, but few close matches.

Wagner's win over Losche was the only three-gamer of the round, although Arlington's Jonn Lynch gave Zeitman all he could handle before losing 21-18, 21-18. The only other round of 16 loser to reach double figures twice was Northbrook's Jeff Bowman who fell to Bledsoe 12 and 16. Hogan destroyed highly-touted Brian Parrot in one of the round's disappointments, 21-4, 21-7.

So all the seeds reached their anticipated positions in the quarter-finals, and here's where the action really started. After Serot "routined" Joe Wirkus 10 and 10 in the first match, Wagner met Hogan, whom he'd never beaten. But this was Rich's day and tournament and he was playing exceptional racquetball. He held huge early leads in both games for 21-17, 21-10 victories. Hogan came back in the first game from a 1-9 and 3-14 deficit to tie the game at 17-all but wasn't able to extend his rally to the 21 point.

"I thought I had him at 17," said Marty. "But I couldn't get it."

In the bottom bracket, Wong pulled another semi-upset by topping Zeitman in two straight 21-19, 21-14. The first game was the certain key to the match, and Zeitman came from behind to nearly take it. But Wong, who sat on 20 for a half an hour, finally captured the game. A late surge in the second notched him the win.

Keeley, playing the first game like a goalie, fell to Bledsoe by the amazing score of 21-6 in that initial battle. But Goldilocks came back to

take victory away from his less experienced adversary 21-11, 21-14 in games two and three.

Wagner then put on one of the best shows seen here in months in the semi-finals Sunday morning. Playing easily the best racquetball of his career, he topped the awesome Serot in game one 21-16, showing a kill ability equal to the mighty lefty's, as well as unreal retrieves. Serot turned the tables in game two returning to form and taking the game 21-14.

The long expected third game never materialized, however, as Serot complained of feeling ill and forfeited the match, claiming that even if he won the third game (a big if) he would not be able to play in the finals. After some discussion, the number one seed, then collected his gear, walked out the door into his racquetball-paid 240-Z and headed back to St. Louis.

Meantime, somebody forgot to tell Keeley to wake up in the first game against Wong. Those who witnessed how bad Steve was against Bledsoe in the first game of their quarter-final match, hadn't seen anything yet. If it hadn't been for a courtesy point Steve would have received the infamous donut. First game to Wong, 21-1.

Apparently Keeley decided to play in the few minutes between games or else somebody pumped some No-Doze into his system. Whatever the reasons, he played the excellent ball of which he is so capable, and blasted Wong 21-6, 21-13 for the win.

While gulping Gatorade after the victory, Keeley almost choked when informed Wagner had beaten Serot and would challenge him for the title.

"Wagner won?!" he gasped. "Are you kidding?"

Apparently Wagner overheard, or maybe it was just a continuation of his superb play. But he continued to amaze people with consistency, both shooting and retrieving.

"I'm playing great racquetball," he would say later. "I'm finally hitting the ball so it feels good."

Wagner wasn't feeling so good after Keeley destroyed him in the first game 21-10. It was a strange thing, Wagner losing a first game for the first time and Keeley winning one for a change. But if everybody thought they'd seen enough weird things for a tournament, there was one more to go. It was called a Wagner win.

Playing just a shade this side of Charlie Brumfield, Wagner stayed right with Keeley, on the ceiling, driving the ball and using his dynamite hard, drive serves. Toward the end of the game with the score 18-all, Keeley seemed to cramp in one leg, or at least hobbled slightly as he went for a shot. Slowing considerably, there was no way for him and Wagner grabbed the last three points faster than a Vegas dealer.

Game three was a carbon copy, but actually Keeley was playing much better than before. Only problem was he was hobbled more. Later he would claim he hit himself in the knee with his racquet, a believable story considering the way things were going. In any event, again they battled down to the wire and again, it was Wagner coming through when he needed it, to capture game, match and tournament 21-18 in the third.

And as Keeley once said, *"Who knows the secret of racquetball?"*

Our thanks to John Hay, Fred Blaess, Tim Plum, Chuck Leve, Dan Rhyma, Dave Edelman and everyone else connected with the tournament. It was great fun, successful and our appreciation is out to those who helped and those who played.

John Wineman & Bob Fitzgerald

The Court House Sports Clubs, Inc. is made up of six equal shareholders from the Chicago area. Naming their racquetball/handball facilities The Court Houses, they are currently the largest single ownership group in the court club business.

Of the six men, John S. Wineman, Jr. and Bob Fitzgerald are the two best known, due to their time commitments to The Court Houses. Both men spend a great deal of time and energies at the various clubs, as with the off-shoot of their corporation, Court Clubs Consultant, Ltd.

The other four men, too, have taken an active interest in The Court House developments, as equal partners financially, as well as lending substantial aid in various parts of the development of their business. These men include Frank S. Karger, Jr. whose banking background and B.A. degree from Roosevelt University have made him an ideal partner; Harry D. Oppenheimer II, founder and Chairman of the Board of HDO Productions, Inc., a firm specializing in rental of tents and accessories for large gatherings. Mr. Oppenheimer also is part owner of several other businesses to which he lends management guidance; Kurt M. Penn, a partner in the law firm of Pierce, Daley & Penn, where Kurt specializes in banking and savings and loan law; William A. Rogers, president of Hydronics Piping Corporation, a mechanical contracting firm specializing in air conditioning and refrigeration systems for commercial, industrial, institutional and municipal facilities.

Bob Fitzgerald is vice president and Sales Manager of Hydronics Piping, where one of his main duties includes assistance to municipalities and private corporations in the development, design, construction and operation of recreational facilities.

John Wineman, formerly the Vice President of the First National Bank of Highland Park, Illinois, is currently devoting his major efforts to The Court Houses. He is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the clubs and also plays a major role in developing new facilities.

Prior to their arriving on the scene, there was a woeful lack of racquetball courts in the Chicago area. The six men (five originally) saw the need for a court club and decided to invest in one, which was eventually built in Northbrook, Illinois. It opened in January, 1974.

Soon thereafter the group boldly expanded, constructing two additional Court Houses simultaneously in Arlington Heights about five miles west of Northbrook, and Schaumburg, another five miles farther west of Arlington Heights.

They then decided to accept a few of the opportunities that came their way due to their successes and a highly complimentary article in the *Wall Street Journal* in June, 1974. That led to an investment partnership to build The Court House in St. Louis, which opened in March, 1975. Early this year they went into partnership with Alan Schwartz, president of the Tennis Corporation of America on another club, the Mid-Town Court House located at Carl Sandburg Village, a large, high rise apartment complex on Chicago's near north side.

Where they go from here, nobody is quite sure. But further expansion does seem the likelihood.

The following interview, conducted by *National Racquetball* editor Chuck Leve, tells The Court House story.

Leve: When did you first become aware of Racquetball?

Fitzgerald: That's a good question. I guess it was about 1962 or '63 that I started playing at the Y.M.C.A. in Evanston when I joined the firm of Barton-Aschman and Associates. We used to go out at lunch time over to the Y and play.

Leve: Back then did you ever conceive of racquetball becoming such an integral part of your life?

Fitzgerald: I never looked at it as a business until I met John.

Leve: John, when did you first realize racquetball could be a business worth pursuing?

Wineman: I first realized it in about 1968 when I was president of the Park District of Highland Park and I went up to Minneapolis to see Ken Rosland about ice rinks. That's when he showed me his Kings Court. I had never heard of racquetball before. I played that first day at the Kings Court in my stocking feet and underwear and that's how it started.

Leve: How did the six partners of Court House Sports Clubs, Inc. get together?

Fitzgerald: From two angles. I changed firms and went with Bill Rogers' Hydronics Piping Corporation. Both of us knew a fella named Kurt Penn who is an attorney and another partner. I had not known John Wineman or Frank Karger although I had known Harry Oppenheimer since I was a kid. John knew Karger and Oppenheimer from past history.

I think we first did something about it when John was president of the Highland Park Park Board and Hydronics was doing the refrigeration work on an ice rink there. A number of contacts were made between Bill Rogers and John Wineman in the contractor relationship and then John Wineman and I met on the site one day and went to lunch.

It came up very casually as I recall in terms of would there be any interest in putting together a group of guys for the purpose of maybe building an ice rink. I think that's what we sat down to talk about.

Wineman: I think that's probably true. The other thing that happened was that I went back to Minneapolis a year or so later and Rosland had built a second club so that was kind of interesting,—his building two clubs. I had talked with Frank Karger and Harry Oppenheimer because they were two guys looking for investment opportunities as was I at that time. We were ready to do something

although we didn't know exactly what it was. Racquetball seemed like a good thing.

Fitzgerald: Seems to me we were talking ice rinks and I personally felt, having been involved with Hydronics, that they weren't a particularly good investment. Then what probably occurred was John suggesting racquetball which I had never thought of in terms of a private club investment. But he had seen Edina and I was a player, okay. And I'll never forget I had taken Harry Oppenheimer one time to the Northbrook Y.M.C.A. to play racquetball and we couldn't get a court to do it again when he wanted to, so Harry built one in a barn on his property. I subsequently started using Harry's barn for my racquetball even though Harry had built a squash court. So Harry had a pseudo-racquetball club on his property which we were using. There were a bunch of cross ties from a long time ago in our group.

Leve: What was your next step? Did



Outside view from the parking lot of The Court House in Northbrook. Clean, simple and attractive.



you go to Rosland for some sort of track record?

Wineman: We hired Ken Rosland as a consultant.

Fitzgerald: In fact the first thing we did was sit down with the group at a meeting where we talked and agreed that we had to look into it some more. And then each of us flew to Minneapolis and actually went up and met with Ken Rosland.

Leve: *Each of you went up separately?*

Fitzgerald: Well, we all were going to go but it turned out I went for Bill Rogers in effect because we were with the same firm. He went later with one of our architects, Chuck Cedarholm. So we all eventually went up there, the first trip as I recall, four of us went. We looked at it, came back, had another meeting and hired Ken Rosland as a consultant. I think it was at that point that we actively started to go out and look for land, started to think about an architect to design it (they finally decided on the firm of Wendt, Cedarholm & Tippens,-

ed.), and then sent Bill Rogers and our architect back to look at the facility.

Leve: *Did you have Northbrook in mind at the time?*

Fitzgerald: We thought it was probably the appropriate village within the area that we all lived. At that time the location of the investors ranged from myself in Northfield up to Rogers in Lake Forest. So Northbrook fell in the corridor we were looking in for sure. We felt Northbrook had the right income and the right age, rather than say, Winnetka or Kenilworth with higher income, but higher age.

Leve: *Why did you buy your property in an industrial park?*

Wineman: We had tried to buy a piece in another industrial park and they wouldn't let us in the park. They didn't want a recreational facility. At the last minute they backed out. We looked very hard for land. We had a terrible time buying a piece of property. There was none available.

Leve: *Did the Glenbrook Tennis Club help or hinder the park allowing you in?*

Wineman: It helped by establishing the precedent in the park that some kind of athletic facility could do well.

Fitzgerald: In the other park we had looked at and thought we were going to get in, there was no recreational use and when the board representing the park met they finally said, "What do we want you for?" That was the end of that park.

Leve: *Okay. What about going for your mortgage. Did you have projections and all that?*

Fitzgerald: We had used Rosland to help us prepare the projections.

Interior lounge of The Court House gives good view of nursery (l.), registration and pro shop area (c.), entrance, courts and sofa setting.

Leve: *In other words you purchased the land before going for a mortgage. What if you couldn't get a mortgage? Did you get a mortgage?*

Wineman: We did not.

Fitzgerald: The thing that we should also touch on that was even before this that I think was important were the decisions in terms of the architecture of the club. We had seen Ken Rosland's club and we liked his concept. But we felt the Chicago area expected plushier materials. So we ended up with eight courts instead of six, and with a substantially greater per square foot cost than he paid. We did this in order to put in some rather rich-looking and at the same time expensive material. We wanted to do a first class job.

We also felt that eight courts was a good number. Ken Rosland felt six was and probably still does today. I'm sure there are people who feel 12 is the right number. We like eight. It worked well in relation to the piece of property, orientation to the locker room and the entire club.

Leve: *If I remember the Kings Court you have to go through the locker room to get to the courts.*

Fitzgerald: That's because Ken built his club initially as an all-men's club. However he ended up letting women have the club for the middle of the day.

Wineman: In fact they ended up building corridors similar to what we eventually put in our clubs, so that the women didn't have to go through the men's locker room to play.

Leve: *Getting back to the beginnings of The Court House, I assume you did want to obtain a mortgage.*

Wineman: Absolutely. The six of us had a number of contacts in the banking business in the Chicago area.

Leve: *I assume that would mean you, John, primarily.*

Wineman: Well, I did by virtue of being in the banking business. But

before that by just living here and knowing people the six of us had developed a lot of contacts in the banking business and we all went out to tap our own contacts, if you will. The answer was very consistent. They didn't understand it; it was a new concept; no track record; and above all it was a single purpose building.

Fitzgerald: I think the other thing that really hurt was to stand and say to a banker, "It's a terrific concept, you can go to Minneapolis and see some." That didn't do much for us. They would say, "Where's the one in Chicago that's successful and going?" There wasn't one.

Leve: *Couldn't you play at all on the success of indoor tennis in Chicago?*

Fitzgerald: We tried. But they'd hit us with the single purpose building argument. At least they could make a defunct tennis club into a warehouse.

Leve: *It's the same problems everybody was and still is running into I suppose. What did you do then? Did you each dip into your pocket?*

Fitzgerald: We had a meeting and dipped.

Wineman: We had been meeting regularly as a group, once a month or once every couple of weeks because . . .

Fitzgerald: We have actually met every two weeks regularly since the group has been formed. We are all partners. In fact we have gotten to the point where at a recent meeting we went from seven a.m. until noon and couldn't conclude the business. We came back the next day and went through the same schedule.

Wineman: We meet every other Tuesday at seven.

Fitzgerald: It happens now to be the end of our fiscal year and we've got a lot to discuss. It's a major time commitment.

Wineman: Anyhow, we met one Tuesday morning and all the returns were in and no one could get the financing. We dug into our pocket and each of the five guys

Wineman: We put the projections together long before for our own benefit initially, to see if it would work.

Leve: *But the figures would have to convince you before you could even start to convince a bank.*

Wineman: Well, convincing a bank was an interesting problem. We didn't even try and convince a bank until we bought the land. We went out and bought the land first.

Leve: *Why?*

Wineman: We wanted to build the club and there was never any question in our minds that the six of us couldn't go out and finance the building.

Fitzgerald: We had been, I think, atypical in terms of development. We were very aggressive, time-wise. We thought we were late in the season and that to proceed in a logical order even though probably sensible would have cost us another year in the process. So we did things assuming the club was going to be built.

put in about \$75,000. We personally borrowed the money individually and threw it into the pot.

As we got toward the completion of Northbrook, I'm not sure exactly where it was in the game, we ran out of money. Which is the kind of thing that is really scary. We went out and got a sixth guy.

Fitzgerald: I think we had, in fact, anticipated running out of money. In fact the membership and the court time had begun to come in well enough by then that we probably could have survived it, the way things turned out. We could have taken it out of operating revenue, held off a few contractors and maybe borrowed another couple of grand. I think it's interesting though, now knowing we could have gotten away with it, had we been able to foresee how well Northbrook was going to start out. But we didn't know it and so we added another guy. Anyhow, that's not the way we do business.

I think one of the interesting things about the six guys is their diversity. You take a guy with a banking background, one in architecture and engineering, another guy who is in the contracting business, you have a lawyer, and another couple of guys who are in a variety of business adventures. It's hard to describe them but they have done it all and seen it all.

I guess the point is that the group we put together wasn't a band-aid type of group, or four jocks trying to make some extra money. It was a diverse group, but each had a great deal to offer to help make the venture successful. Without the

talents of the group we would have either hired from the outside to get them or else made some mistakes.

Leve: *What was the point of no return?*

Wineman: The point at which we decided to go ahead was toward the end of the summer when we hired a manager. We interviewed and hired a guy who we put on the payroll November first of 1973. His job at that point was to start getting things in order, spend some time in the construction trailer handling the promotional department, so that when the club eventually did open, we were ready.

Fitzgerald: Major efforts had gone into preparing a mailer which we sent out to 35,000 people.

Leve: *By this time, though, you already were well on your way, with architectural drawings, I'm sure and more. Was Ken Rosland still involved at this time?*

Wineman: Our commitment to and from Ken was a very limited one. It had a little bit to do with having some availability to his club, his operating figures. It was not a long-standing relationship. It just got us going.

Leve: *But you did decide to pretty much follow his concept. At what point was that decision made?*

Wineman: Well, we thought it through. The decision we made initially was that we were a court club selling court time for the benefit of men, women and kids. Our concept was low membership fees and court fees as opposed to a health club concept, or annual membership fees with free court time.

Leve: *Was that a sticky point? After all there was no local experience in this kind of arrangement.*

Wineman: But every tennis club in the Chicago area that we saw did it this way. So we did have something to follow.

Leve: *Did you feel, with that in mind, that people could relate to the tennis club industry and realize how much less expensive it was to play racquetball?*

Fitzgerald: Yes, I feel we thought the relationship was there. There were a great number of things we felt were comparative to tennis facilities. One that stands out was the question of partitions in the men's shower rooms. Rosland does not have any. We always provide them in our clubs, and did so in Northbrook because all tennis clubs in the Chicago area have them. There's a great precedent there in this kind of facility.

Leve: *Did you visit any facilities other than Rosland's?*

Wineman: We visited the other clubs in Minneapolis, looked at some Y.M.C.A.'s here . . .

Leve: *You didn't go out to the west coast or anything?*

Wineman: Not before we built Northbrook. We since have seen many of those facilities. I think Bob visited the Executive Club in Chicago.

Fitzgerald: That was during construction. We had a decision to make regarding the floors and I was told I could see one way it was done by going to the Executive Club.



Guest of honor at The Court House's Grand Opening in Arlington Heights was U.S.R.A. President Bob Kendler (c.), flanked on the left by John Wineman and to Kendler's left, Bob Fitzgerald.

Wineman: We sent our managers up to see the Milwaukee clubs one day before we opened.

Leve: All right. So now you've hired a manager, and sent out flyers, the club is under construction. One of my earliest recollections of specific meetings with people at the Court House is when I walked in one day and you were putting in ceiling tiles. What was the investor and engineer doing putting up ceiling tiles?

Fitzgerald: I managed the construction of the building, and of all of our buildings.

Leve: Did you take bids on the construction?

Fitzgerald: We took bids on the construction rather informally. We in effect, negotiated an internal contract between the partners because two of us are in the construction business. We took a flat fee for putting the building together and took bids on the subtrades. But we really did two other things, one, only allow people to bid it who were reliable or very reliable contractors and secondly, work on those people a little bit to become competitive.

Leve: How did you decide you were going to promote, to get the word out to everybody?

Wineman: We made two decisions, I think. One, the most effective and probably the most expensive promotion is direct mail, and we designed our direct mail piece, which included the concept of a free hour of court play and got it into as many households as we possibly could by going to a mailing service covering the immediate area.

Fitzgerald: Thirty-five thousand brochures we figured would cover well over 100,000 people. We were thinking about a 10 mile radius.

Wineman: The second thing we decided to do and had the ability to do it because of the various people and the wives of the people in our group was to spend a lot of time trying to get the kind of publicity in the press that is really helpful.

Fitzgerald: The kind you can't pay for,—the feature articles.

Wineman: We put together press releases and we wrote letters and made calls upon the right people in the Chicago area. And one of the wives in particular of one of our guys has a lot of contacts in those areas and she did a terrific job.

Leve: Can you name her?

Wineman: Patti Penn. We got little squibs in people like David Condon's column and full page articles. We've been very lucky.

Leve: Did you have a target membership figure? A number that you could call the first year's break even point?

Fitzgerald: No.

Leve: Didn't you keep asking your managers, "Hey, how many memberships came in today?"

Fitzgerald: Yea, we were doing that. I don't know that we knew the objective.

Leve: But you were curious?

Fitzgerald: I had a background with a consulting firm. For about two or three years I did economic feasibility studies, for municipal improvements, generally parking garages and things of that nature. I guess some of that experience ended up in the projection tables we used to try and get the banks to finance the project, an attempt that was unsuccessful. That may be a reflection on the work that was done.

For one, we made projections on the cost to operate the facility. It had been my experience that everytime you make a cost projection, you are always 25, 30, 50 per cent low. So we goosed those figures up and we still turned out to be way low. We missed it by a mile.

We missed certain costs like the cost of doing towels, which we missed drastically. There were a whole group of costs which we just plain didn't include, that turned out to be significant. The one that stands out in my mind was the cost of providing hair spray, combs and soap. We had a miscellaneous column that you might have said that's where it was. I don't know



THE BIG SIX: (From left to right) Fitzgerald, Karger, Wineman, Oppenheimer, Rogers, Penn.

that we really thought of it being there. It was a substantial item that I had really completely missed.

Leve: So now you're at a point where people are calling, they're talking to Vern Reich and Gil Schmitt, I guess, your first two managers.

Wineman: Yes. I think Gil started on the payroll December first.

Leve: So you're trained your people, they're knowledgeable, and it came time to open the doors. What kind of a Grand Opening did you envision and did you decide on having?

Wineman: We didn't have any Grand Opening. We had our highs and lows. One day our return mail would be 20 cards and we'd be happy and the next day only one and we'd be unhappy.

One of the most amusing things that happened in retrospect, was when we placed an ad in a string of suburban weekly newspapers, saying "We are open, come and play with us, use your free coupon." The papers ran the ad a week early. And we thought, "Gheez, all these people are going to come pounding on our door and we're not open." We got zero response on the ad. Nobody showed up.

Leve: That's funny.

Fitzgerald: It wasn't funny then.

Wineman: It told us how not to go in advertising.

Fitzgerald: You know, that's a good point. It sure is funny now, but I'll

tell you when you've got a half a million bucks or more sunk and you run that ad and nobody shows up

...

Wineman: But one of the things that we had done was have several hundred members before we opened the doors. Many of these had taken permanent time and they were calling wanting to know when we were going to open. So these people all knew when we were going to open. And a lot of people were sitting back at home with the application they received and the attached coupon waiting for the club to open.

Leve: Did you know this? Did you feel this? Or were you skeptical?

Fitzgerald: I don't think we knew it.

Wineman: I would say we were kind of concerned about what was going to happen. We had no experience in this. What happens if you open the door and nobody comes in? What are you going to do?

So we opened the door on January 19th, 1974 and the first few weekends were really exciting.

Fitzgerald: It was pandemonium.

Wineman: We were busier than hell. All six of us plus Vern and Gil were there all of the time collecting coupons, answering questions, giving tours.

Leve: Can you remember a specific evening around this time when you came home, relaxed and said to your wife, "hey the thing's working!"?

Wineman: Not that early.

Fitzgerald: Absolutely not that early. I think we were still

concerned. It goes back to your question of a break even point. Maybe a real sophisticated group really would have tied down that number, okay. I don't think we knew enough about the operating costs. We maybe didn't even know how to value our money in the deal. If you have a mortgage, you know what you're going to pay each month. There were a lot of things that wouldn't tell us what the break even point was.

The one thing we were always searching for was to make the next week better than the week before. That's what was encouraging. We would meet every two weeks still, with the group and we'd review the last two weeks of figures and you could see everybody thinking relative to the prior two weeks. If there was growth, that was great.

Wineman: I forget exactly what the pattern was. Our prime time, our evenings from seven to nine were pretty busy, but our daytimes were miserably dead. All of our wives went out and tried to hustle their friends. It was really slow during those day hours, for a while.

Fitzgerald: I think my wife rounded up about 16 girls. She was packing that place. It really helped to have somebody doing something in there.

Leve: Did you ever get around to re-applying for a mortgage?

Wineman: Yes. I think it was the end of March when we called all of the lenders back. We said, "Here's what we've done. Here's what we've got, here's what our performance has been, what do you say now?"



Leve: *This is after about two and one-half months?*

Wineman: It was no more than that.

Leve: *How many members did you have then?*

Wineman: I would guess we had about 1,000, or pretty close.

Fitzgerald: One of the keys was our membership rates. The women only paid five dollars, the men paid \$15 and the family was \$20. We purposely had a very low membership rate, feeling that in the Chicago area, anybody, anybody could risk five dollars.

Leve: *The low membership fee,-- was it for that reason or also partially because you were opening in mid-season?*

Fitzgerald: No. Strictly to get them in the door.

Wineman: Recognizing the fact that women didn't know what racquetball was, you had to do something to at least get them to give it a shot, thus the free coupon, thus the low membership rate.

Fitzgerald: We also very openly published our full year rates. We made it very obvious to everyone that this was just an introductory rate, and that next year the rates would be higher.

Wineman: Anyhow, the lenders came back in and I would guess that we had four to six offers at that point. And we accepted a loan that was a standard, conventional, favorable, nice mortgage. Period. We signed that mortgage in mid-April of 1974.

Leve: *So everybody got their money back?*

Wineman: No. They got 75 per cent of their money back.

Fitzgerald: Yea. I don't know that I would use the word "favorable" about that mortgage. I guess, again, under the conditions at that point a 75 per cent loan, well, was certainly the best we were going to do.

Wineman: It was a very conventional mortgage.

Leve: *What was your membership peak that year?*

Wineman: When the *Wall Street Journal* article hit in June they quoted us as having 1800 members. I suppose that's about what we had at that time.

Leve: *When did you start thinking about club two, and club three and so forth?*

Wineman: I remember this one.

Leve: *Before you go into it, John let me ask you another question. In some of your early meetings, going over figures, even prior to the buying of the land, did you ever dream of four, five, six, ten Court Houses?*

Wineman: I never did.

Fitzgerald: Absolutely not.

Leve: *You thought you'd put up this one club for investment purposes?*

Fitzgerald: That brings up, I think, a really critical point. We went in under the assumption that each of the six guys would probably donate five per cent of their available time, and cumulatively those five per cents from six guys would be sufficient to put this adventure together. We would hire a manager, each of us would somehow watch the investment, and it would be a

good investment. And that would strictly be it.

Fortunately, John was, well how do we describe this point in your life, John?

Wineman: I was between opportunities.

Fitzgerald: John was on a sabbatical. In no time it became obvious that someone would have to expend 100 per cent of his energies. Fortunately, John wanted to do it and had the time available to do it. And each of us probably instead of putting in five per cent of our time put in a lot more than that. So there was significant time contributions we didn't recognize.

I don't know when it was time-wise that we decided this thing could maybe be more than one club, and talked about the possibility. It looked that there was certainly enough for one guy and probably two guys to do.

We had a meeting and what came out of that meeting was the idea to expand to realize it was a business and in effect, to have two guys do it full time.

Wineman: It's interesting. Vern is a great kid, okay. But he had no experience in club management and he is substantially younger than we are. To turn over a half million dollar investment idly to someone who has no experience, in retrospect doesn't make a lot of sense, although Vern has done a great job.

Fitzgerald: He's learned an awful lot.

Wineman: And we all have learned with him. It's really that simple.

Fitzgerald: It required a lot of different talents. Not just six guys investing and handing it over, saying they'll kind of look at it occasionally.

Leve: *So when did you decide it was time to go into the next one? It would seem to me that when you obtained the mortgage, that must have been a key.*

Wineman: I'm not sure that was. I do recall that when Northbrook had generated some reasonable success we had idle conversations once in a while about what the future would hold. I remember one evening in May, I was at the club and Bob, Bill Rogers and Jay Hechtman were at Hydronics and we were talking on the telephone about controls, and cash and all of those things. We hung up and those guys came directly from Hydronics to my house. We sat in my screened porch, it was one stormy night in May and we talked about the whole concept of controlling the money, of building the business and doing all that. It was right after that we decided we would go build some more clubs and immediately we went out and bought some more land, or at least began to identify locations.

Fitzgerald: I think we really made the commitment to make it a business, not an investment. It probably would have had to be that anyhow, but we made it as a formal commitment and went out and did it, instead of being a one club investment.

Wineman: We agreed to get an office.

Fitzgerald: We had no office.

Leve: *That's an interesting point you make. How would you define the difference between the club being a business as opposed to an investment?*

Wineman: An investment I don't think you spend 12 hours a day with.

Fitzgerald: We are relatively convinced, although somebody else may prove us wrong, that it does not take six guys who are willing to put their money in and

hand it to somebody else. I think you have to have a commitment out of the group.

Leve: *Did you find any new problems building two clubs simultaneously? And running a third. Was this a problem?*

Fitzgerald: From the building point of view there most definitely were some advantages. The problems, financially, well we had just experienced a hell of a time financing one club and now we elected to do two.

Leve: *It seems crazy. All the problems you had financing the first one, and now you were going to build two more?*

Fitzgerald: We established, because of the first one, an interim line of credit. We still did not get a mortgage but we got a lender who agreed to make us, in effect, a three year loan for the two clubs and we would be responsible for paying off that short term and making a long term loan.

Wineman: And we got that interim loan because of some fairly close connections. We didn't just walk off the street and get it.

Fitzgerald: We could not have gotten it without the group.

Wineman: And I think also based upon the financial stability of the six guys.

Fitzgerald: I guess that's another thing there's no secrets about. Each of us personally signs every loan we get. There's a lot of risk that goes along with that, that a lot of people wouldn't take.

Leve: *What were some of the changes you made in clubs two and three, other than the obvious expansion of your locker areas?*

Wineman: There were little details that I think make the club a lot nicer, that you don't notice.

Fitzgerald: The interesting thing is that it's a whole different structure, which is only by accident. Northbrook is built of wood. You'd never know it. The whole thing is wood. We could not buy steel in 1973. It was unavailable, that's

when the great steel shortage was on.

We went and changed the plans overnight. These are the kinds of things that came out of our group that were neat. Right there we had the construction expertise, we made the change, we pushed it through the city and went and built a building that's framed with two by twelves. Arlington and Schaumburg are steel.

Wineman: There are a lot of little details in the club.

Fitzgerald: The counter arrangement is completely different. We have a real, functional sales area now, in fact we just made changes in Northbrook to get more towards what the other ones turned out to be. The nursery is two and one-half times larger now, and has a bathroom. This was a significant and important change, both of those were.

Leve: *Why did you decide to go outside the six partners into St. Louis?*

Wineman: We had received a number of telephone calls from around the country asking how could we help them get into the racquetball business. An awful lot of them in response to the *Wall Street Journal* article. And one of the guys who came to us was Byron Sachar from St. Louis. He came not because of that but because we have a mutual friend in Chicago.

Byron came to us and initially it was could we consult with him and what would we charge and etc. What ended up happening was he couldn't put the whole deal together himself, he was going to have to get outside investors in St. Louis. He asked us if we wanted to participate with him and we formed a joint venture, if you will, and built a club in St. Louis. Because we're involved it's called The Court House.

Leve: *Was there any disagreement among the six about going out of town?*

Wineman: None.

Fitzgerald: I hesitate to say it now, but we were doing so well at that moment I think we were convinced we could drop this thing anywhere and do well. Unfortunately, the St. Louis experience has not been the same.

It wasn't because of competition and I feel very strongly that we will make it a profitable situation, but the club opened at the wrong time.

Leve: *What was the structure of your arrangement in St. Louis? Was this a 50-50 deal, The Court House,*

Ltd. or whatever it is 50 and Sachar 50?

Fitzgerald: Corporately, that's not really the set-up but that's the case.

Wineman: Our group owns 50 per cent and he owns 50 per cent.

Fitzgerald: It's not the same corporation.

Wineman: He is considered a managing partner with a management contract and compensation proportionate with the profitability. One of the problems was it took longer to build

that building than it took us up here and in fairness, he had a lot of weather problems and he had a very difficult site to build on. Whatever the reason was, we opened there in Mid-March which gives you no season, plus the fact that spring comes earlier in St. Louis. It just was not a good time to open. We will never open a club again at that time of year. We would rather wait until the following fall.

Play is picking up each week and things are going okay. I think in the fall it will be fine.



Locker room panorama at the Arlington Heights Court House gives an excellent lesson in good use of space, bright colors and cleanliness.

Leve: *With that experience, then, why Sandburg? Now you're getting involved in a project which has had tons of problems getting off the ground.*

Wineman: When I first heard about Sandburg I really thought it was a neat opportunity and maybe was secretly jealous, but hoping it would work for whoever was putting it together.

I had never met Alan Schwartz, but Alan's tennis doubles partner is my uncle's brother, John Foreman. And John called me one day at The Court House and asked me if I would see Alan Schwartz. He wanted to talk with me. And Bob and I went and saw Alan Schwartz.

Fitzgerald: It's funny. I used to be the assistant tennis pro at Lake Shore Country Club and also played prior to that, and knew John Foreman from across the net. It's funny how some of those things come together.

Wineman: And the four of us met that day in Alan's office.

Fitzgerald: And John Foreman was there apparently just to carry the introduction. I've never seen him since.

Wineman: He didn't even stay the full meeting.

Anyhow, that's how we got together with Alan. That had all come about because the original bids came in too high, and for a number of other reasons the deal never got going. In the meantime we had built up our reputation.

I'll tell you a funny story. One day when we had opened The Court

House it was early in the game and there was a woman in a warm-up suit who sat in that club all morning long talking to women and taking notes. Well, a friend of mine came into the club to see me that day and saw that woman sitting there and ran over and said hello and introduced me to her. It was Mrs. Alan Schwartz. She was doing her market research.

Fitzgerald: In fact Alan had come with his architect, Bob Friedman, during construction and spent quite a bit of time in the trailer.

Wineman: So we had a meeting with Alan and it ended on a kind of favorable note, as I recall. We were going to all be thinking, the months went by and we formed a partnership agreement.

Fitzgerald: It's funny in the evolution of this whole process. We also created Court Clubs Consultant, Ltd. because of the great number of phone calls we'd received, so we tried to formalize that relationship to help other people do things.

Leve: *How has all this, four clubs up, one under construction, affected your lives?*

Wineman: My golf handicap has gone from 12 to 15. I don't play golf any more. I think it's been an exciting time for everybody.

Fitzgerald: I was in the heating and air conditioning business. Now all I do is build clubs. It's more fun building the clubs. I like the change,

personally. I've played racquetball three times in the past month. Right now we're very busy, but it's fun.

Wineman: We work our asses off.

Fitzgerald: Regarding the Mid-Town thing, I think there's no question we're going to do more things because of that association. We already have two additional pieces of property.

Leve: *Wasn't the original concept of Mid-Town a great deal more elaborate than the normal Court House operation?*

Fitzgerald: One of the things we did when we entered the project was to drastically revise the plans. We moved the nursery from downstairs to upstairs, the locker room has been expanded significantly, in both the men's and the women's. We just did a lot of tearing out and revising in terms of the plans.

Wineman: But I don't think the operational concept is going to be much different. Were going to be a court club, we're going to sell court time on the same basis, memberships on the same basis, and operate pretty much the same way. It's a different crowd, it's a different neighborhood, but it won't be that different.

Leve: *What about future sites, other cities? We know of the crying need for courts in Atlanta, Miami, Boston and others. Are these things on your mind?*

Wineman: They're on our mind. We've heard from people and had opportunities in different areas.

Fitzgerald: Personally, I think there are several areas to that point. We're holding a meeting with our group next Thursday in an all day

session, involving where we expand. One of the things I am beginning to feel is that Chicago is approaching the time where there may be a little overbuilding. I don't think we're particularly interested in any more suburban sites in the Chicago area. Competition is coming very fast and there are people who, and we say this with a great chunk of pride, maybe don't know as much about it, who seem to be leaping into the game. We're a little nervous about the suburban situation. I understand that Minneapolis suddenly arrived at the point of being overbuilt. St. Louis has a lot going on down there. I think we are conservatively looking at potential in-city sites in Chicago that we *might* build on. We have a site which we will build on, but whether we look at more, I don't know. And we're looking in other cities.

Leve: *Can you name any of the other cities?*

Fitzgerald: We have looked in Boston. One of my reactions to Boston is there's no clubs there, and I guess you can look at that two ways.

Leve: *At least you can bring the figures with you this time.*

Fitzgerald: The east coast is very interesting in terms of the fantastic squash crowd. And every time we get involved talking to the east about racquetball you always get, "But how much squash?" Maybe you can build an all squash club there and do better than building an all racquetball or a combined racquetball-squash club. I really don't know.

We're convinced they don't know what they're talking about out there. Everybody we talk to in the east says, "Well you gotta have a significant amount of squash." We don't think so, but then that doesn't mean we're right.

Leve: *Can you give any general advice to people who want to build in particular areas of the country?*

Wineman: I think that people who have come into the Northbrook club and seen The Court House operation in general, from their side of the counter, when the club is busy, and there's a lot of activity, and we're selling racquets, it really looks great and everybody wants to jump on the bandwagon. What nobody really knows is the problems that you have staffing it, the 30 percent increase in operating costs over what we projected. . . .

Fitzgerald: Fifty.

Wineman: It's a very substantial increase. If we work really hard at it, we're going to have a profitable thing. But I think it's going to take good management and a lot of hard work. The owners haven't taken any money out of it yet, we have plowed it all back into expansion. I think people have to really be realistic about court clubs.

Leve: *Without giving me figures, are you making this tremendous return on your investment like everybody seems to think you are?*

Wineman: I don't think we're making anywhere near what everybody thinks we should be making. That is absolutely truthful.

Fitzgerald: Northbrook has been a fine investment. Arlington and Schaumburg may or may not be, we don't know that yet. You're not going to find out in the first year. If those clubs had to survive on what they did in the first year it would be a losing proposition. We hope they're going to do better this year. We expect them to do better, and that they will be good investments for us.

Wineman: There's a future for court clubs if there's an orderly growth of facilities and a proper development of demand. We have exposed literally thousands of people to racquetball in the Northbrook area.

Leve: *You've turned on the whole city, I think.*

Wineman: But that isn't going to satisfy four or five clubs. There just aren't enough people.

Fitzgerald: Bowling alleys did not develop orderly. Tennis clubs, and this is just my own opinion, but because of the bankers reaction to bowling, developed very orderly. They had seen what you can lose in recreation, and they went almost the other way, which caused an orderly development.

Now that tennis courts have gone so well, I think that banker may be inclined the other way. We may or may not have orderly development in court clubs.

Wineman: I think that over the long run it will be proven that pure court clubs like The Court House will be more successful than tennis clubs that add on a few courts. I think that a lot of the operators of tennis clubs are trying to capture some market either because they're play is down or something.

Leve: *Could it be because you can build five racquetball courts in the space of one tennis court?*

Fitzgerald: No, but the tennis developer says, "I have a fixed facility right now. I have it all there, I can add four racquetball courts, not increase my locker room because it's not that crowded. . . ."

Leve: *But if you were a tennis club owner, with 10 or 12 courts, wouldn't you build five or 10 racquetball courts on two of those tennis courts?*

Wineman: Maybe, but a person who adds on five racquetball courts way at the end of a building, a long way from the locker room, and then sort of treats the racquetball players, not intentionally, but it just happens that they're almost second class citizens. It doesn't turn on the players.

Fitzgerald: If you added those racquetball courts, you'd still have a tennis club, with racquetball.

Wineman: Most of our women are women who are playing racquetball because they really like racquetball and they didn't like tennis. Maybe they didn't like the tennis whites, or the frustration of the game, or whatever. I think they're happy being in "their" club, not in a tennis club.



If you were a front wall, this is what you'd see at The Court House.

Leve: *What do you look for in a manager of a court club?*

Wineman: We have kind of fallen into our managers by circumstances. But I think we're all pretty much agreed that because you're a racquetball player, or a damn good racquetball player, doesn't make you a manager or a good manager.

Fitzgerald: It may even be a detriment.

Wineman: If the guy is really interested in being on the court all of the time, or playing in the national tournaments, or traveling a lot, he's not a manager for us. We need a guy who's going to be there, seven days a week, 24 hours a day and available to the members and us.

Fitzgerald: We want a person who is interested in managing a club.

Wineman: We have a manager who is a good racquetball player. But he's very happy managing the club. He's not interested in touring the country. He's interested in promoting his club and promoting lessons, and he makes an awfully good manager for us.

Leve: *Don't you feel it will become increasingly more difficult to find people like this as more and more clubs go up? As I see it, you're going to need three more people in the next few months for your clubs. Now, where are you going to find three more managers?*

Wineman: Well, we're not looking for three managers.

Leve: *Then let's break that down. After your managers, what do you look for in your desk personnel?*

Wineman: We think we pay our people above average. We're looking for people who are interested in a future with us. We're building an organization that should have some appeal for them.

Fitzgerald: We're looking for people who are going to go, in some respects into a competitive situation to become a manager, knowing that we're growing but also knowing that there's only a limited amount of opportunities. They are going to have a rise above

the rest or they're not going to make it. We hire college graduates, and not because they're college graduates but it seems that the people we are attracted to as desk personnel or managers, have college degrees.

Leve: *Every one of your Court Houses has developed a sophisticated lessons program. Is this an important part of your over-all program?*

Wineman: Sure.

Leve: *Why?*

Wineman: Because it encourages play, it increases enthusiasm, it teaches the newcomers, especially women how to play the game. They want to know how to play the game. We have provided everything from free clinics to private lessons and everything in between. If you have a good teacher, someone who can create the interest and excitement of the game, it works to the advantage of the player and to the advantage of the club.

Leve: *Had you been able to fill those daytime hours initially, would there have been a need for lessons? Was one of the ideas to at least get people into the courts during the day, even with lessons?*

Wineman: I think we wanted to give lessons, because it should be part of the club to teach anyway. But I also felt we had to give lessons to get people in to play.

Leve: *Are most of your lessons given to women?*

Wineman: Most of our lessons are given to women, not all. About 85 per cent.

Fitzgerald: Maybe closer to 90.

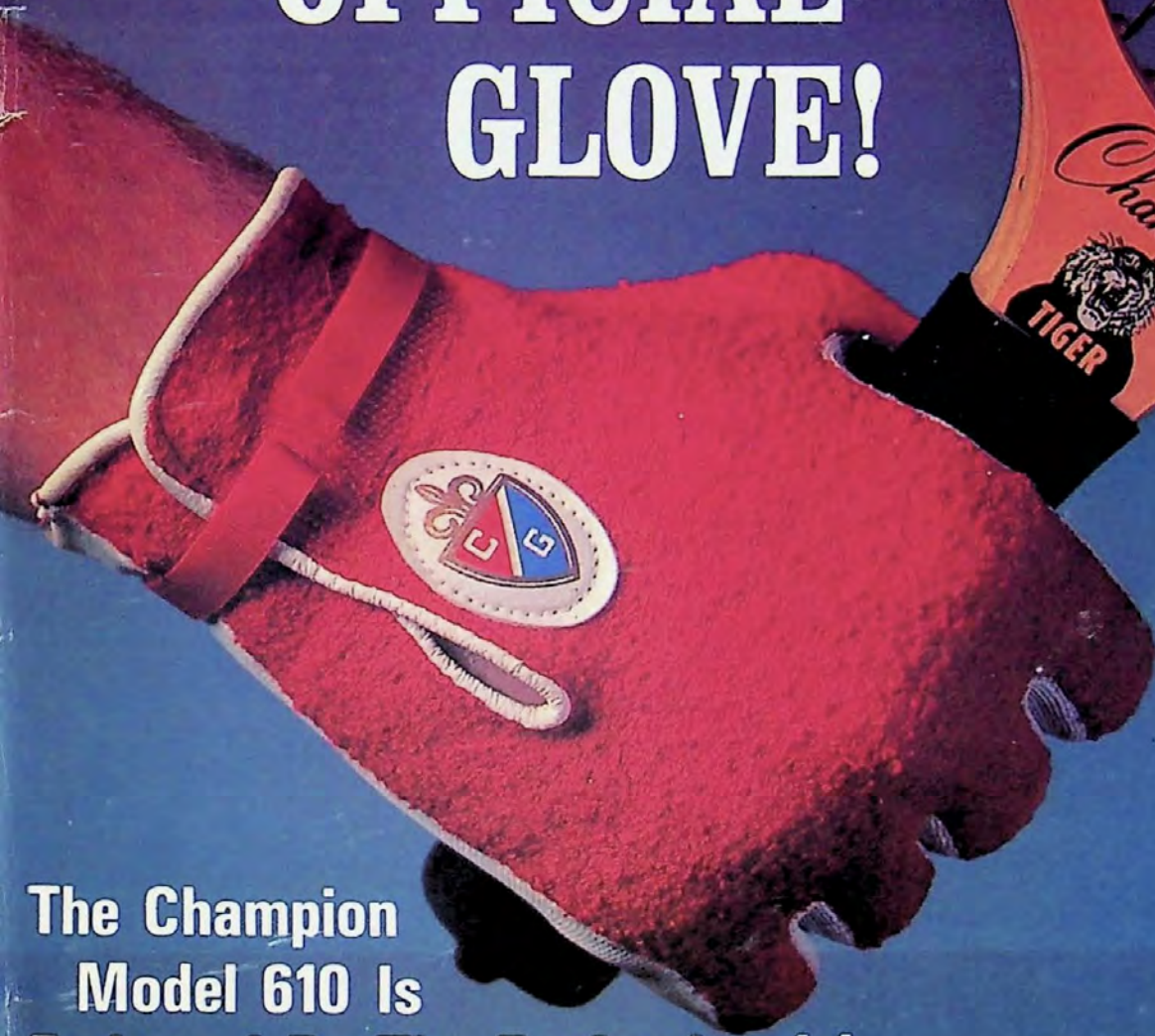
Leve: *Have you ever considered hiring a top player, just to give lessons at your various clubs?*

Fitzgerald: I don't think so. From my tennis background I know that a good player is not at all necessarily a good teacher.

Leve: *Amen. A lot of top players don't realize that. But some of today's top players are excellent teachers.*

Fitzgerald: And some of them are not. And some are in between. Some players have so much natural ability they really don't know what they do right on the court.

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