

# RACQUETBALL



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U.S. Racquetball Association  
2812 W. Colorado Avenue, Suite 200  
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#### ON THE COVER

The Men's #1 Doubles Finals at the USA National Intercollegiate Championships. Thomas Carter/Manolo Sandoval (Baldwin Wallace University) prevailed in an 11-8 tiebreaker over Brad Schopieray/Erik Garcia (Colorado State University-Pueblo). Photo by Gallemore Photography.

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Racquetball Magazine welcomes submissions from our members and readers. If you have an idea for an article, propose it by email to: [magazine@usaracquetball.com](mailto:magazine@usaracquetball.com). All submissions are subject to editing.

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Arizona State University Racquetball Team congratulates Darrin Schenk on receiving the 2016 Coach of the Year Award at the USA National Intercollegiate Championships.

Photo by Gallemore Photography



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## USA RACQUETBALL MISSION STATEMENT

*USA Racquetball, recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport, is committed to our members and the growth of racquetball from recreational play to international competition.*

## USA RACQUETBALL CORE VALUES

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## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS & TEAM QUALIFYING

All future National Championship details remain tentative until entries are published.

### U.S. NATIONAL TEAM QUALIFYING

In an effort to help ensure that the top American racquetball players have an equal and fair opportunity to qualify for the U.S. National Team, USA Racquetball adopted changes to the qualification process beginning with the 2016-17 U.S. National Team.

While the process for qualifying for the Team as a doubles team is generally the same, the singles selection procedure will be determined by performance at three selection events.

- UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Pro Division
- U.S. Team Singles Qualifying Division at USA Racquetball National Doubles Championships
- U.S. Team Qualifying Division at USA Racquetball National Singles Championships

To learn more and for complete details, including the process to qualify for Elite Athlete Health Insurance, please visit <http://www.teamusa.org/usa-racquetball/programs/team-usa>.

### U.S. NATIONAL TEAM QUALIFYING RULE CHANGE EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2016:

ALL U.S. TEAM QUALIFYING DIVISIONS WILL BE USING THE NEW TWO SERVE RULE THAT WAS RECENTLY ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL RACQUETBALL FEDERATION (IRF).



FROM THE  
Executive Director

By Jason Thoerner

## National Headquarters

# USA Racquetball On The Move!

**U**SA Racquetball is undergoing changes to upgrade areas that affect our members. Some are behind-the-scenes changes to enhance customer service, reporting, and financial processes that will pay off in the long run. Other changes have been experienced by our members who attended this year's National Championships: updated branding, higher quality gift bag items, more social events, and all meals provided during the weekend. These types of changes cannot be made without support from our players and sponsors. We are striving to provide increased value for your entry fees!

We have recently implemented a Limited Event Membership upgrade. The Limited Event Membership is a great way for a new player to try out a local tournament to see what all the fun is about. In the past, if the player had a great time and decided after purchasing an LEM to go with a full membership, there was no reduction in membership cost for a full membership. Thanks to Ryan Rodgers at R2 Sports, we now have the automated ability to charge only the difference in membership fee costs if that person would like to upgrade to a full membership within the first 30 days of playing the event.

Another upgrade that we are very proud of concerns *Racquetball* magazine. We have grown from 44 pages to 48 pages in the past two issues, including more coverage and more photos. Aimee Ruiz, our magazine editor, has done a great job of including fresh new features on happenings around the sport, and looking back on some of the great players of our past in the very popular "Where Are They Now?" feature.

USA Racquetball has improved the reach of our online streaming of National Championships. Under the leadership of Leo Vasquez, we have expanded our free coverage of these events to Facebook Live. This has given us an enormous number of new viewers we have not been able to reach in the past. Social media is a great way for USA Racquetball to reach many viewers who might not know that racquetball is alive and well. Thanks to all who have watched online and have shared our broadcasts on your personal pages. This is a great way for USAR members to help expand our reach and let others know how much fun our sport is!

Our goal at USA Racquetball is to give you the very best membership experience. We will continue to work hard in the coming months to roll out new programs to grow the sport and provide more value to your membership. Please contact us to provide feedback as we move forward!

## CHARLIE PRATT ANNOUNCED AS US JUNIOR TEAM COACH



Pratt, 31, was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, and he and his wife Ceci now live in Gainesville, Florida, where he is part owner, manager, master trainer, and nutritionist at Zen Fitness, a small gym on a tennis facility with two racquetball courts. Pratt provides personal training and nutritional counseling to his clients. He is ranked #22 in the USA Racquetball rankings and #16 on the International Racquetball Tour.

When asked what it means to him to take the role of US Junior Team Head Coach, Pratt replied, "I am excited to be a part of the US Junior Team once again. I played on the team for five years, and they were some of the best years of my life. I have no doubt that this experience will be the same." His goal? To bring the best possible junior team to Junior Worlds (in Minneapolis this November), and he delivered this message to juniors competing at the Junior Olympic Championships in Stockton, California: "Play hard and have fun!"

USA Racquetball Executive Director Jason Thoerner said, "We are pleased that Charlie is assuming this position, and we are looking forward to working with this accomplished individual who has a lot of racquetball experience as a US Junior Team player, a certified nutritionist, an extremely accomplished referee, and much more. Charlie recently competed with the US Team at the Pan American Racquetball Championships in San José, Costa Rica, and earned the silver medal at the event."

As the US Junior Team prepares to compete at IRF World Juniors Championships this November, Coach Pratt has secured approval from the US Team Committee for the following roster of US Junior Team staff members: Robert Collins (Assistant Coach), David "Bobby" Horn (Assistant Coach), Jen Meyer (Esprit Coach, 12/10 Under), Jody Nance (Athletic Trainer/Assistant Coach), and Cheryl Kirk (Team Leader).

## IRF JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The IRF Junior World Championships are coming back to the United States and will be held from November 5-11. The IRF awarded the 29th edition of these Championships to Life Time Fitness in Minneapolis, MN. The Target Center is the main venue, which is also the home of the US Open.





# New Additions TO THE BOD

It was a little over a year ago when I heard that I had been elected to the USA Racquetball Board of Directors. It was a great and humbling feeling to receive the news that I would be joining the Board. But I have to admit, it was even more awesome, this past April, to have the opportunity to call our newly elected Board members and be the first to share the news of their appointments with them! Please join me in welcoming Joel Barshaw, Joanne Pomodoro, and Cindy Tilbury to the Board. Each of the new Board members will serve a three-year appointment, and they all possess a genuine passion-driven enthusiasm for racquetball. In addition, the Board unanimously voted to appoint Thurman Brooks to a two-year position. These are four great additions to our Board!

Continuing to serve on the Board are Jonathan Clay, Jose Diaz, Scott Fish, Michelle De La Rosa, Cheryl Kirk, Aimee Ruiz, Leo Vasquez, and Mike Wedel (our new treasurer). I'm excited to continue to work with this amazing group of people.

Sadly, we do have four departing members, and I want to thank them for their years of service to the Board. Larry Haemmerle, Chris Poucher, Don Schopieray, and Treasurer Laurel Davis have all exited the Board as of our May meeting. I've enjoyed working with and getting to know them.

During the Saturday evening awards dinner, Larry was presented with the plaque (shown on right) thanking him for his time as past President. Thanks to each for all they have given to racquetball!

A question I often get asked is, "What does a Board member do?" It's a really good question. I remember that when I joined the Board a year ago, I didn't quite know what to expect.

The responsibilities of a USAR Board member include:

- Serving an elected three-year term.
- Participation in monthly meetings via conference call.
- Traveling to and participating in all-day Board meetings in person at National Singles and the US Open.
- Serving as a member or chairperson on 2-3 committees.

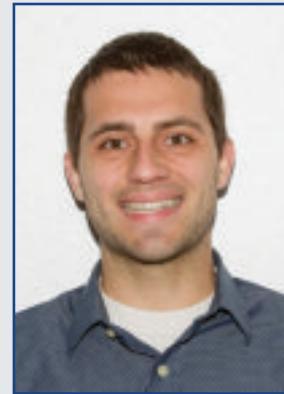
In addition to those Board-specific commitments, Board members also continue to serve as racquetball ambassadors in their home regions (e.g., on state boards, as tournament directors, etc.). They do this in addition to other commitments within racquetball while working around professional and career obligations and with the support of their families.

This is a unique and great group of people. They all give so much of themselves to make racquetball better for everyone. Do not hesitate to reach out and introduce yourself to any of our USAR Board members. We would like hear from you, and we can help you get involved, too! All of us are proud to serve, and I am proud to stand alongside this Board.

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, indications of candidacy are reviewed annually by the Election Committee in September/October. Look for details on the USAR website. If you would like to help make a difference, I encourage you to apply!

# WELCOME to the BOARD OF DIRECTORS

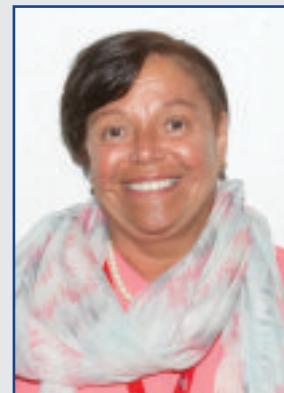
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Joel Barshaw



Thurman Brooks



Joanne Pomodoro



Cindy Tilbury



# ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE CAN RAISE MORE THAN **\$30,000 FOR THE TEAMS!**

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

Donations of \$100 or more, made in 2017 to the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, *will be doubled* by the group of generous Team Benefactors at right, who have each pledged up to \$2,500 to support the cause. With your support, the USA Racquetball family can raise more than \$30,000 for your U.S. National Teams!

## TEAM USA CHALLENGE BENEFACTOR

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*Under the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, donations will be used to support direct travel costs of U.S. Junior and Adult National Team Members.*

*To become a benefactor for the 2017 Team USA Challenge, please contact USA Racquetball at 719-635-5396, ext. 129.*

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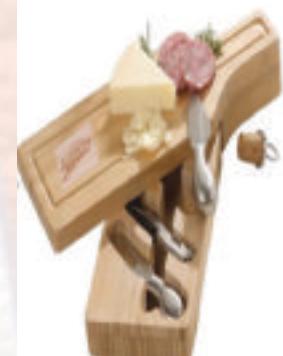
**\$100** or more will receive an **Electronic Travel Kit**.



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# USAR National Intercollegiate Championships

## COLLEGE PLAYERS BASK IN SUNNY CALIFORNIA

**Penn**

By Jason Thoerner

Photos By Gallemore Photography



The 2017 USA Racquetball National Intercollegiate Championships presented by Gearbox and Penn were held in Fountain Valley, California, March 29-April 1. Thirty-three schools were rep-

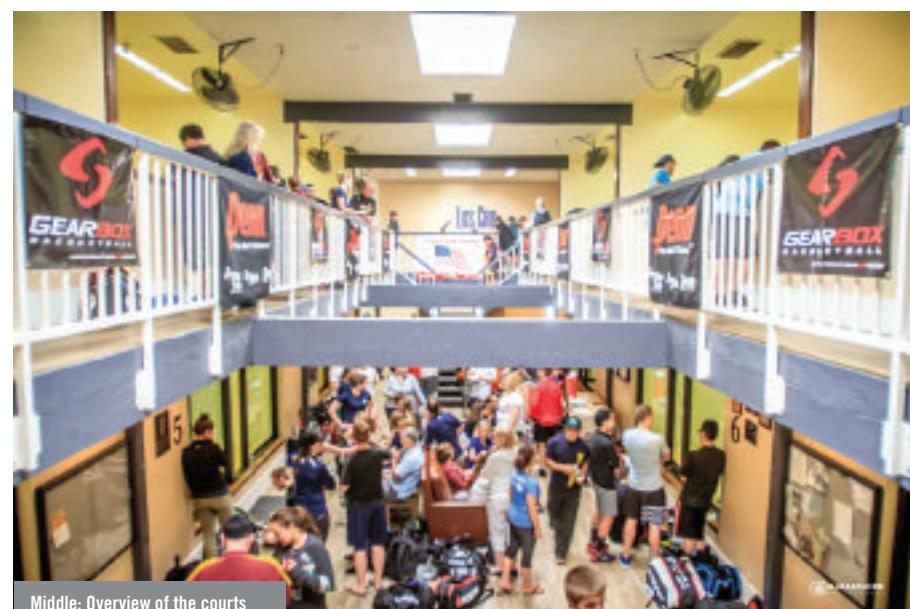
resented by over 200 athletes playing their hearts out to earn points for their individual schools. The venue was the exquisite Los Caballeros Racquet and Sports Club that hosted the players at a world-renowned venue with perfect made-to-order weather all week. One of the most talked about features of this event was the hospitality provided from Good Time Grilling for lunch and dinner each day. Jimbo and Gary fed our players like they were dining at a high-end restaurant, and they always had smiles on their faces as hundreds of players filed through their line. We would like to give a huge "Thank You" to every one of the sponsors, staff members, and volunteers who went above and beyond to make this a great week for the players.

This Championship emphasizes team play, and players are slotted into divisions based upon their school ranking in singles and doubles. In singles, each team can roster a player in #1 through #6 divisions and in doubles they can roster one team in divisions #1 through #3. The event is run in Olympic format to ensure that each player gets at least three matches in his/her respective divisions. Players start out in the Gold section of their divisions but drop down to either Red, White, or Blue based on which round they lost. Medals and team points are given out in each of these divisions so each round advanced means a lot to the team totals. Every match mattered as play advanced towards the finals of each division. Teammates were all smiles as they each took their turn receiving their individual medals in front of the USA Racquetball Championship banner.

After all matches were played, the Men's, Women's and Overall Team Champions were announced on the beautiful Los Caballeros Stadium tennis court. Congratulations to Oregon State University who won the Overall Team Championship for the 10th time in Division I and to Rochester Institute of Technology for winning the Overall Team Championship for Division II. In the Women's Team competition, it was Oregon State University coming out on top in Division I with Rochester Institute of Technology in Division II. The Men's Team competition crowned Baldwin Wallace University in Division I and Rochester Institute of Technology in Division II. The annual Coach of the Year award was presented to Arizona State University Head Coach Darrin Schenck. The USAR Collegiate Council selects the recipient in advance of the tournament each year.



Overall Team Champions:  
Oregon State University



Middle: Overview of the courts  
Below: Men's #1 Doubles Finals



In the Men's #1 Gold division, Thomas Carter of Baldwin Wallace University came into the Championship as the #1 seeded player after having finished as a semifinalist at the 2016 event with a loss to the eventual champion Marco Rojas. Carter was cruising through the draw until he ran into a red-hot Adam Manilla of the University of Colorado. Carter won the first game 15-6, but in the second game Manilla started to find his groove and ground out a 15-13 game win to force a tiebreaker. It was point for point, dive for dive, until Carter started to put the pressure on Manilla and close it out with an 11-6 win and a trip to the finals. In the finals, Carter faced Erik Garcia of Colorado State University-Pueblo. Carter won the first game 15-8, but the second game was a back-and-forth battle as Carter elevated his level of play to match the power and intensity that Garcia was bringing. With the second game tied at 13-13, Carter fired off two serves to the right side for aces and a 15-13 win. As a result, Carter earned a spot on the 2017-18 U.S. National Adult Team.

In the Women's #1 Gold division, Carla Muñoz of Colorado State University-Pueblo stormed through the draw without dropping a single game along the way. Muñoz was the defending champion and did not want to relinquish her title to Melania Sauma of Arizona State University. (Earlier in the event Sauma defeated the current 18-and-under Junior World Champion, Erika Manilla, in a hard-fought quarterfinal match that propelled her to the finals.) Muñoz used a variety of drive serves to keep the pressure on Sauma right from the beginning of the match. Sauma could not find an answer to the power game and Muñoz repeated as champion with a final score of 15-6, 15-3.



Top: Women's #1 Singles Finals

Middle: Tournament players arriving at the club

Left: Thomas Carter, Men's #1 Singles Champion with Nick Irvine

Below: Awards Ceremony



# 2017 NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

## Los Caballeros Racquet and Sports Club, Fountain Valley, CA · March 29 - April 1

### TEAM COMPETITION

#### Overall Team Division I

1. Oregon State University (2,072)
2. Baldwin Wallace University (2,035)
3. CSU - Pueblo (1,1816)

#### Men's Team Division I

1. Baldwin Wallace University (1,810)
2. CSU - Pueblo (1,326)
3. Oregon State University (807)

#### Women's Team Division I

1. Oregon State University (1,265)
2. University of Missouri (789)
3. Brigham Young University (764)

#### Overall Team Division II

1. Rochester Institute of Technology (259.50)
2. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (181.00)
3. Clarkson (40.50)

#### Men's Team Division II

1. Rochester Institute of Technology (233)
2. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (124)
3. Clarkson (40.50)

#### Women's Team Division II

1. Rochester Institute of Technology (57)
2. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (27)
3. Clarkson (5)

### MEN'S SINGLES

#### Champion:

#1	Thomas Carter
#2	Brad Schopieray
#3	Kyle Ulliman
#4	Lukas Le
#5	Jeremy Dixon
#6	Ethan Slutsky
Open	Austin Cunningham
A	Lincoln Cluff
B	Max Chen
C/D	Ryan Gaynor

### WOMEN'S SINGLES

#### Champion:

#1	Carla Muñoz
#2	Erin Boadway
#3	Madison Kerzel
#4	Natalie Lorati
#5	Kalie Moloney
#6	Chloe Durrans
ABC	Bonnie Burr

### MEN'S DOUBLES

#### Champions:

#1	Thomas Carter/Manolo Sandoval
#2	Jeremy Dixon/Kyle Ulliman
#3	Daniel Herrera/Ethan Slutsky
ABC	Jerrad Highman/Tim Williams

### WOMEN'S DOUBLES

#### Champions:

#1	Erika Manilla/Erin Boadway
#2	Madison Kerzel/Natalie Lorati
#3	Ashley Smith/Lindsey Repp

### 2017 COLLEGIATE ALL AMERICANS

#### Mens

Hayden Anderson  
Aaron Booker  
Thomas Carter  
Ryan Chin  
Jed Cromwell  
Connor Dietz  
Jeremy Dixon  
Erik Garcia  
Michael Goodman  
Daniel Herrera  
Tyler Hoffman  
Steven Lauterbach  
Lukas Le  
Adam Manilla  
Nicholas Riffel  
Diego Rodriguez  
Mauro Rojas  
Manolo Sandoval  
Brad Schopieray  
Ethan Slutsky  
Nicolas Smith  
Joseph Thiriot  
Francisco Troncoso  
Kyle Ulliman

#### Womens

Rosana Barboza  
Nicole Barrett  
Erin Boadway  
Brittany Caldwell  
Courtnei Duncan  
Melissa Dunn  
Chloe Durrans  
Emily Harrod  
Jeanna Heaton  
Madison Kerzel  
Melissa King  
Nicole Krambule  
Erica Lipski  
Natalie Lorati  
Jessica Lubold  
Erika Manilla  
Kalie Moloney  
Carla Muñoz  
Katie Nieswiadomy  
Emmalee Packer  
Melania Sauma  
Jessica Smith  
Ashley Smith  
Lexi York  
Krista Yourstone



Photo By Gallemore Photography



Extreme 175

*Markie Rojas*

**Markie Rojas**  
US Open Doubles Champion  
US National Intercollegiate Champion



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# US Team Takes Silver In Costa Rica Pan American Racquetball Championships

By Cheryl Kirk | US TEAM LEADER  
Photos By Cheryl Kirk



The beautiful San José Indoor Club was the site of this year's Pan American Racquetball Championship. Six athletes made up Team USA. Bobby Horn (California) had the #1 Singles spot with Charlie Pratt (Oregon/residing in Florida) occupying the #2 Singles position. Bobby and partner Jake Bredenbeck (Minnesota) were our Men's Doubles "force to be reckoned with." Rhonda Rajsich (Arizona) played #1 Singles, and Sharon Jackson (Georgia) competed in the #2 Singles slot. Rhonda and partner Sheryl Lotts (Ohio) comprised our Women's Doubles Dream Team.

Staff members Dave Ellis (Head Coach/California), Brent Huff (US Team Trainer/Illinois), and Cheryl Kirk (US Team Leader/Illinois) rounded out the official delegation.

But wait, there's more! Pat Ellis, who we unanimously agreed is Dave's exponentially better half (even Dave said so), was with us as Team Mom. Sharon Jackson's mom Frances joined us on Saturday all the way from Indiana, and Ceci Pratt, Charlie's wife, arrived on Tuesday to support Team USA.

## Opening Ceremonies

Fifteen countries participated in the Parade of Nations at the Friday evening Opening Ceremonies: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, United States, and Venezuela.

The Ceremonies were a big WOW! The President of Costa Rica, Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, honored the event and our sport by attending the first part of the Ceremonies, which took place at The Indoor Club. He delivered stirring comments to the athletes before needing to depart for his seventh (!) engagement of the day. After the athletes' and referees' oaths were taken, unusual and delightful entertainment followed with a mime juggling act (reminiscent of Charlie Chaplin) and more juggling using internally lit clubs that were synchronized by the performers.

## To the Courts!

The tournament format was round robin Saturday-Monday to determine main round seeding that began on Wednesday and went through the second Saturday of this eight-day event (including the day off). The atmosphere at the Indoor Club was electric throughout the event. Spectators sat and stood in front of each court, many cheering loudly and chanting for their country's players and teams. Conversations between old friends and new took place everywhere. Add the pop of racquetballs against the walls and all of this resulted in a cacophony, loud but not unpleasantly so; the environment was so typically racquetball at a fever pitch.





Team USA Selfie

the first game 15-7. As was true the previous day against Samantha Salas, Rhonda again went to the walking drives that gave her serves more deception. She built a big lead, and it looked like she was going to close it out quickly. Paola is tough, and she would not let Rhonda move off of 13 points. Soon it was 13-13 and Rhonda hit a lob serve that Paola skipped badly. The next point saw Rhonda hit a clean winner for the game. Rhonda dominated the tiebreaker with her solid play, and it was Gold for her and for Team USA. It was a super win!

“Charlie Pratt played the tough Mexican, Alejandro Landa. Landa has a great game with solid drives and an uncanny ability to hit the ball on the run for a winner. Both games were battles with lots of seemingly impossible gets, many sideouts, and great play during the rallies. In the end, Alex got the win in two games, 15-10, 15-11. Charlie, our delegation’s rookie, had a great tournament.

“Jake and Bobby were matched against Alejandro Landa and Polo Gutierrez. The match started typically in “helter skelter” fashion with both of our guys covering for each other all over the court. Both have unbelievably quick reflexes and excellent soft hands. Unfortunately, after a first-game win, things changed for the worse. The Mexicans relaxed and started taking advantage of our shots that came off the back wall. This continued into the third game, and coupled with a few breaks for the Mexicans, Jake and Bobby went down in the tiebreaker by a score of 11-4. Jake and Bobby have

immense talent, and playing together, they are one of the best shows in racquetball.

“I’m really proud of our delegation. In my 14th year of working with Team USA, there was something special about this one, and I’ve been trying to put my finger on it. They all really wanted to be there and were glad that they “got the call,” aka, the invitation. They all had a sense of humor, yet each one had his/her own unique brand. At the matches, they were all there for each other throughout the tournament. All were so proud to play with “USA” on their backs. Each gave 100% whenever he/she was on the court.”



Coach Dave & Pat Ellis

## PARC Results

After the round robins Saturday-Monday (to determine main round seeding) were complete, it was a free day on Tuesday, and then things moved pretty quickly once the Wednesday first rounds commenced. Suddenly, it was Saturday (again!).

The complete set of draws are available for viewing at <http://www.internationalracquetball.com/pan-american-championships.html>

U.S. Team members earned their way into three of the four finals matches:

**Women's Singles:** Rhonda Rajsich defeated Paola Longoria, Mexico, 7-15, 15-13, 11-9

**Men's Singles:** Charlie Pratt lost to Alejandro Landa, Mexico, 10-15, 11-15

**Men's Doubles:** Jake Bredenbeck/Bobby Horn lost to Alejandro Landa/Polo Gutierrez, Mexico, 15-10, 8-15, 4-11

## Coach Dave's Wrap-Up

“Two of the best women players in the history of racquetball took to the court as Rhonda Rajsich and Paola Longoria squared off in the finals of the women’s gold medal competition. This was a rematch of the Pan American Championships in 2008 on the very same court here at the Indoor Club. (I believe that was the first time that Paola had defeated Team USA’s number one player.) Paola started off strong and won

## US TEAM RESULTS

**Women's Singles** - Rhonda Rajsich - Gold

**Men's Singles** - Charlie Pratt - Silver

**Men's Doubles** - Jake Bredenbeck and Bobby Horn – Silver

**Women's Doubles** - Rhonda Rajsich and Sheryl Lotts - Bronze

## INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

Gold; Silver; Bronze/Bronze (in PARC and IRF events, both semifinals places receive bronze medals)

### Women's Team

1 - Mexico

2 - USA

3 - Guatemala

4 - Ecuador

### Men's Team

1 - Mexico

2 - USA

3 - Bolivia

4 - Canada

### Overall Team

1 - Mexico

2 - USA

3 - Bolivia

4 - Guatemala

## Friendship Cup

A Singles - Tim Baghurst, USA - Gold

35 Singles - Tim Baghurst, USA - Gold

A Doubles (45+) - Marie Gomar, Guatemala/Cheryl Kirk, USA - Bronze

# Rajsich & Carson Capture Gold in the Grand Canyon State

## Rhonda Rajsich Wins Her 10th Singles Title, Rocky Carson Captures His 7th

By Leo R. Vasquez  
Photos By Gallemore Photography



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The 2017 USA Racquetball National Singles Racquetball Championships recently concluded in Tempe, Arizona, on the campus of Arizona State University. The 50th Anniversary of the National Singles Championships was presented by Penn and Tempe Tourism and was hosted at the Sun Devil Fitness Complex. On top of a full week's worth of high-level racquetball competition, players from across the country came together and enjoyed special activities all week long and then capped the weekend off with a celebration of the annual award winners as well the induction of three new members into the USA Racquetball Hall of Fame.

More than 50 national racquetball champions were crowned with gold medals in divisions separated by skill, age, and age+skill for men and women. The National Championships also offered Heroes divisions including Military (active and retired), Police, Fire, and EMS. In addition, the Men's and Women's U.S. National Team Qualifier divisions were also competed with one-year appointments to the U.S. National Team up for grabs. Rocky Carson (Ladera Ranch, California) defeated David "Bobby" Horn (Stockton, California) in the men's final, 15-8, 15-7. Rhonda Rajsich (Fountain Hills, Arizona) bested Jacqueline Paraiso-Larsson (Ramona, California) in the women's final, 15-7, 15-9.

Participants in the National Championships were treated to lunch and dinner throughout the week, an upgrade over past Championships and part of a plan to improve the overall experience at

National events. Other planned social parties included the Thursday Ladies Night Out, the Friday Night Pool Party, and the Saturday Night Banquet which was a sellout with no seats available. Matches on the championship court were also streamed live on the Internet and archived for anyone to view.

A highlight of the National Singles Championships was the Saturday evening Annual Awards and Banquet Ceremony, a celebration held inside the Graduate Hotel Ballroom that recognized those athletes and contributors who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in competition, leadership, or sportsmanship during the last twelve months.

**The award winners for 2017 were:**

**Terry Rogers & Jack Hughes - Joe Sobek Outstanding Contribution Award**

**Mark Baron - Presidential Award**

**Sal Perconti - John Halverson Fair Play Award**

**Rhonda Rajsich - Female Athlete of the Year Award**

**Rocky Carson - Male Athlete of the Year Award**

**Cindy Tilbury - Peggy Steding Female Age Group Award**

**Jeff Stark - Bud Muehleisen Male Age Group Award**

Tim Hansen, Bud Held, and Otto Dietrich were inducted into the USA Racquetball Hall of Fame, the highest honor in the sport of racquetball. The three new members of the "Class of 2017" took their place alongside the game's legends and contributors in a memorable ceremony in the presence of current Hall of Fame members and family and friends of the new inductees.

Dr. Bud Muehleisen was in attendance and introduced racquetball's most famous inventor and founder of Ektelon, Franklin "Bud" Held, who was inducted as a Contributor. Held shared



his fondest memories from the early years of the sport. He talked about how racquets were made and how he invented the world's first aluminum racquet-ball racquet and its related stringing equipment in his San Diego garage. It was definitely a treat for those in attendance to hear firsthand from an inventor and pioneer of racquetball.

Next up was Tim Hansen of Florida who was inducted as an Amateur Age Player. As the most decorated amateur age group male athlete in the history of the sport, Tim has amassed over 37 National Gold medals and 17 Silver medals. He has also been a member of the prestigious U.S. National Racquetball Team and a National Doubles Open Champion.

Tim thanked his many friends and playing partners for helping him achieve such great success on and off the court, and he dedicated his induction to the memory of his late father for always encouraging him to be the very best at whatever he did. He also spoke about the many referees he had encountered over the years, which segued nicely into the next Hall of Fame inductee, Otto Dietrich, who refereed many of Tim's matches over the years.



Otto Dietrich, inducted as a Contributor, has been a member of USA Racquetball's National Rules Committee continuously for more than 35 years (since 1982). Six years after first being appointed to the committee, he became the sport's National Rules Commissioner, a title that he has held ever since, except for the five years (1998 - 2003) when he stepped aside to serve as USAR's Board President.

Otto went all the way back to 1973 and said he would never forget the great advice Earl Dickson gave him on how to get a great seat to watch the best racquetball matches. "Earl told me, 'You can offer to referee, they won't start the match until you get there, you can get a great position for the best view, and the players won't start playing until you call the score.'"

The Nationals Singles Championships concluded on Sunday as National Champions were awarded gold medals, runners-up received silver medals, and semi-final finishers were awarded bronze and pewter. Photos were taken in front of the Championship banners, and the proverbial selfies were also taken around the club before everyone said goodbye to another memorable National Singles Championships. Congratulations to all the winners, and thank you to all the staff and volunteers who did an outstanding job all week.

For a complete look at the brackets and results, go to:

[http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/  
viewResults.asp?TID=20098](http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/viewResults.asp?TID=20098).

Top Left: Men's Team Qualifying Finalists: Rocky Carson & David "Bobby" Horn  
Middle: Women's Team Qualifying Division Champion Rhonda Rajsich  
Left: Women's Team Qualifying Runner-Up Jacqueline Paraiso-Larsson

# CONGRATULATIONS HALL OF FAME “CLASS OF 2017”



Franklin "Bud" Held



Tim Hansen



Otto Dietrich



Photos By Gallemore Photography





# 2017 NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS | RESULTS

## Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona · May 24 - 28

Photos By Gallemore Photography

### WOMEN'S

Division	Champion	Runner Up
Team Qualifying	Rhonda Rajsich	Jacqueline Paraiso-Larsson
Open	Hannah Shnurman	Sara Jeys
25+	Cindy Burman	N/A
40+	Jenny Cole	Jennifer Dering
45+	CJ Herceg	N/A
50+	Laura Brandt	Cindy Tilbury
55+	Janet Tyler	Cindy Tilbury
65+	Cheryl Conrad	N/A
75+	Mildred Gwinn	Marquita Molina
A	Heather Mahoney	Erin Broadway
24- A	Erin Broadway	Graciana Wargo
30+ A	Stephanie Banks	N/A
40+ A	Nancy Davis	N/A
50+ A	Susie Boulanger	Mary Jane Boese
60+ Elite	Susan Hendricks	N/A



### JUNIORS

Division	Champion	Runner Up
J10-	Raelynne Larsson	N/A
J12-	Thea Mattfeldt	N/A
J14-	Gabriel Blair	N/A
B16-	Jason Sauer	Bryan Barbera
G16-	Briana Jacquet	Heather Mahoney



### MEN'S

Division	Champion	Runner Up
Team Qualifying	Rocky Carson III	David Horn
Open	Dylan Reid	Luis Avila
24-	AJ Bennett	Trevor Casey
25+	Joel Barshaw	Joel Adler
30+	Brent Walters	Israel Torres
35+	Brent Walters	Raymond Maestas
40+	Jeff Stark	Thomas Gerhardt
45+	Jimmy Lowe	Jeff Stark
50+	Doug Ganim	Jimmy Lowe
55+	Tim Hansen	Mike Grisz
60+	Mike Grisz	Mark Baron
65+	Frank Taddio	Joe Lee
70+	Gary Jones	David Olson
Heroes Open	Andy Ekblad	Lance Trella
Heroes A	Erik Solter	Don Jorgensen
Heroes B	John Vitale	David Bandelier
Heroes 40+	Erik Solter	N/A
Heroes 50+	Robert Frazier	Gary Buckmaster
Elite	Andy Eckbald	Jesse Mendoza
A	Trevor Jones	Herman Deluna
B	Timmy Hansen	Don Jorgensen
C	Nick Ierardi	Sam Sorokin
D	Michael Kranitz	Chandler Harvey
24-A/25+A/30+A	Trevor Jones	AJ Bennett
40+A	Herman Deluna	Tomas Martinez
50+A	Kyle Kennedy	Glenn Carlson
60+A	Joel Franklin	Lorenzo Arredondo
25+B/30+B	Carlos Carrillo	Frank Senger
40+B	Julio Carrillo	Deven Naik
50+B	Sherwyn Phillip	Burkhard Klosener
60+B	Michael Stephens	Roy San Miguel
24-CD/25+CD/30+CD	Kyle Grimes	Chandler Harvey
40+CD	Sam Sorokin	Clayton Nishikawa
60+CD	Don Greenwald	Andrew Blasquez
30+E/40+E	Bryan Shaw	Trevor Jones

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# The Race for the 2017-18 U.S. National Team Has Concluded!

The last qualification event for the 2017-18 U.S. National Team has concluded at the 2017 U.S. National Singles Championships. Team Qualification points were awarded based on finishing position as follows:



Champion	100 Points
Runner-Up	80 Points
Semifinalist	60 Points
Quarterfinalist	30 Points
Round of 16	10 Points
Round of 32	5 Points



The UnitedHealthcare US OPEN comprises 20 percent of the Team Qualification process, with a Team Qualifying Singles Division held at National Doubles contributing 30 percent and the National Singles Team Qualifying Division comprising the remaining 50 percent.

Congratulations to those that placed in the Top 4 and received invitations to join Team USA.

## Final U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings Top 4 Men

STANDING	PLAYER	US OPEN INT DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	SINGLES DIVISION AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%	NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	TOTAL POINTS
1	Rocky Carson	80	16	100	30	100	50	96
2	David Horn	10	2	80	24	80	40	66
3	José Rojas	60	12	0	0	60	30	42
4	Jose Diaz	10	2	30	9	60	30	41

## Final U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings Top 4 Women

STANDING	PLAYER	US OPEN LPRT DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	SINGLES DIVISION AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%	NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	TOTAL POINTS
1	Rhonda Rajsich	30	6	100	30	100	50	86
2	Jacqueline Paraiso- Larsson	0	0	60	18	80	40	58
3	Sharon Jackson	5	1	80	24	60	30	55
4	Janel Tisinger	5	1	60	18	60	30	49

The qualification process for doubles teams continues to be based on the Team Qualifying Doubles Division at National Doubles.



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# 22ND ANNIVERSARY PREVIEW

By Doug Ganim

Photos By Restrung Magazine & Roby Partovich

**I**t's hard to believe it has been 22 years, but the 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships is approaching! UnitedHealthcare is back as our Title Sponsor as we make plans to celebrate our 22nd Anniversary. This means the event is going to be bigger and better than ever! The purpose of this special preview is to give you an idea of what to expect at this year's tourney.

**Amateur Draws:** Amateur matches will be played at three venues: Life Time Fitness Target Center, Life Time Fitness Fridley, and Life Time Fitness Minneapolis Athletic Club. In the event the draw grows again in 2017, a fourth club, the University of Minnesota Rec. Center, will be used the first two days. No consolation divisions will be offered (except in the HEROES Divisions) due to the huge draw and lack of available court time. The competition will be excellent in all of the divisions offered as we welcome competitors from all over the world. The top four finishers in each division will receive oversized US OPEN medals that weigh about one pound each! Divisions are offered for every age and skill level in both singles and doubles. Back for 2017 is the addition of five Centurion Doubles divisions (you and your partner's ages must add up to at least 100).

**Pro Match Tickets:** There is no better place in the world to watch pro racquetball than at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships. First of all, every top player in the world on the IRT and LPRT will be in Minneapolis. For the true racquetball enthusiast, this means incredible matches to watch right from the Round of 32. Second, ALL pro match courts are professionally wired for sound so spectators can hear every grunt, groan, and under-the-breath comment throughout every match of the tournament. The ball sounds like a missile being shot off, so be sure to bring your earplugs if you have sensitive "flappers." Third, all the feature pro

matches take place on the breathtaking made-for-TV portable stadium racquetball court. This engineering marvel has four walls made of crystal clear Lucite acrylic that is not only optically correct (no tinting, blurring, or bending of light) but is beautiful to behold. The Lucite materials are butted up against each other with Lucite "fins" providing the support. Even the "L" brackets are made of Lucite, so the result is a seamless visual experience that makes you feel like you are right in the court with the players. The stadium seats about 1,400 fans, and ticket sales are always brisk. Your best bet is to purchase a Preferred Ticket Package that includes all sessions. This is by far the best value (\$139 for spectators, \$99 for players). For those who want the full VIP treatment, consider purchasing a courtside Gold Box. Cost is \$2,800 and includes four seats with All-Access credentials. Individual seats can be purchased for \$800 if inventory is available. Call (614) 890-6073 to check availability.

**Parties, Parties, and More Parties!**: One of the things the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is best known for is the evening social functions. For those who have attended in previous years, you can expect more of the same this year starting with the free admission Pro-Am Doubles for Charity on Wednesday evening, the fun "Late Night Players Gathering" at the Marriott City Center Lobby Bar on Thursday evening, the Players Dance Party on Friday evening at Huberts, and the largest bash of the year, the Saturday evening Party with the Pro's at the hot downtown club The Pourhouse. (Note: Friday and Saturday night parties are 21 and over only). Other activities include a special Thursday evening IRF International Reception for all our "outside of the country" guests, and a weeklong Industry Trade Show in the Players' Hospitality Village featuring all the top racquetball manufacturers displaying the latest and greatest gear available in the sport.

**Back for 2017!**: To celebrate the 22nd Anniversary of the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, many event upgrades will be back for this year. First, the main host facility and nerve center for the US



OPEN is Life Time Fitness Target Center. They have completed an amazing \$17 million renovation of the club featuring all new five-star locker rooms, new restaurant and bar, new four-star spa/salon, new swimming pool, and complete high-end face lift to all other areas of the club. In short, the main club is now one of the finest athletic clubs in the entire world! Second, we will again feature an 8,000 square foot carpeted US OPEN Players Village complete with the Industry Trade Show, silent auction for children's charities, bar/concessions, US OPEN Souvenir Sales, and a stage with live entertainment. Third, to commemorate this historic occasion, a limited edition 22nd Anniversary embroidered hat will be given to all players in attendance in addition to their micro-fiber tournament shirt, souvenir program, and registration package. Lastly, to honor our brave service members, we will again feature singles HEROES Divisions for both men and women. Current and retired military, police, fire, and EMS professionals will be eligible to participate.

**Can't play in the event?:** If there is no way you can play in the tournament, consider coming in just for the weekend to be an enthusiastic spectator. The pro singles quarterfinals are Friday afternoon, pro doubles semifinals Friday evening, Players Dance Party at Huberts Friday evening, the pro singles semifinals/pro doubles finals Saturday, Grand Gala Party With the Pro's Saturday evening, and the pro singles finals are on Sunday. Just those three days will be an incredible experience and should not be missed. Buy your tickets NOW and book your hotel!

**No way to attend the event this year?:** If you absolutely can't make it to this year's tournament, even as a weekend spectator, then the last resort is to follow the action from home. To help make this easier we will transform our website -- [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com) -- into a computer "window" to look in on the action at the tournament. Plans include offering live amateur division results posting, up-to-the-minute pro match results, digital photography from throughout the event, streaming video of select pro matches via the IRTNetwork, and web-radio voice interviews with top pro's as well as play-by-play voice streaming of the quarters, semis, and finals (pay per view package required -- sign up at [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com)).

## TIPS FOR ATTENDING

**Tip #1: ENTER EARLY!** The event is expected to completely sell out this year. At 760 players, we cap the draw and start turning people away. Don't get shut out! Enter today online at [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com)

**Tip #2: ORDER TICKETS NOW!** You must have a ticket to view any of the pro matches, and although the Stadium Court seats over 1,400, the event is always a sell-out from the quarterfinals on. No-shows can free up some session tickets at the door, but it's risky to wait. By far, the best deal is to purchase a Preferred Ticket Package for unlimited viewing for ALL pro matches for the entire week. This guarantees you a back wall bleacher seat, but remember, ticket packages are sold ONLY in advance! Cost is \$139 for non-players and just \$99 for players.

**Tip #3: ENTER TWO OR THREE EVENTS.** Court time restrictions (and the large draw) do not allow us to offer consolation divisions, so we strongly recommend you enter two divisions so that you are guaranteed at least two matches. Although players are limited to just two divisions, there are a couple of exceptions. First, if you would like to play "up" into the Men's or Women's Pro draw (perhaps just for the experience), you can still play in two amateur divisions, for a total of three events. Second, if at least one of your divisions is doubles, you can play in any third event you choose. For these two exceptions only, a third event is permitted.

**Tip #4: STAY AT THE HOST HOTELS.** Check the entry form for the official list of host hotels. With the event in a downtown setting, area hotels are quite expensive. However, we have negotiated some great deals with our three downtown host hotels (Marriott City Center, Hampton Inn & Suites, and the Normandy Inn), and we have a large number of rooms blocked for our group. All three hotels are walking distance to the Life Time Fitness Target Center. These hotels will fill up VERY fast, so call to book your room immediately. In addition, we have two suburban hotels with free parking (SpringHill Suites and Country Inn & Suites). These hotels are ideal for players driving in for the event.

**Tip #5: BRING NICE CLOTHES AND YOUR DANCING SHOES!** One of the really fun parts of attending the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is experiencing the many evening social activities offered, especially the Grand Gala – The Party with the Pro's. Racquetball or casual attire is not allowed at this bash, so "dress to impress" will be the rule!

**Tip #6: LAST FLIGHT OUT ON SUNDAY.** Make sure you book the very latest flight you can to head home on Sunday. The Men's Pro final is the last match of the tournament and you won't want to miss it! A packed house, booming music, laser light show introductions, and television cameras make this an experience like no other in the sport. The match usually ends around 2:30 pm, so any evening flight will do.

**Tip #7: FLYING IN -- NO RENTAL CAR NEEDED!** From the Minneapolis airport you can take the city's clean light rail directly into downtown Minneapolis and right to the Target Center (only 22 minutes). Cost is just \$1.75! Two of the three clubs we are using (including the main club where all the pro matches are played) are downtown and so are the three host hotels. All downtown hotels and clubs are walking distance apart. For the Life Time Fitness Moore Lake club, we will offer a free shuttle every 20 minutes from the Target Center (club is only 17 minutes away). If you are driving in for the event, parking is going to cost you daily in downtown Minneapolis. Check out the Normandy Inn that is offering daily parking for just \$14 per day or try the SpringHill Suites in St. Louis Park or Country Inn & Suites near Fridley for free parking.

Tip #8: Consider buying a Gold Box seat for the week (\$800) and treat yourself to the ultimate US OPEN experience. Rubbing elbows with all the top pro's in the Pro/Gold Lounge and having the most comfortable seat/best view seat in the house is worth the price alone. Throw in the all-you-can-eat food and drink for the week and it becomes a no-brainer! Visit [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPENTickets.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPENTickets.com) to reserve your spot today. Seats are very limited, so book yours now before they are all gone!

# 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN IRT PREVIEW

By Doug Ganim



Photo By Restrung Magazine



Always the highlight of the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, the IRT draw in both singles and doubles will undoubtedly deliver another memorable year for racquetball fans throughout the world. More than ever, young stars and wily tour veterans will be gunning for the coveted US OPEN title.

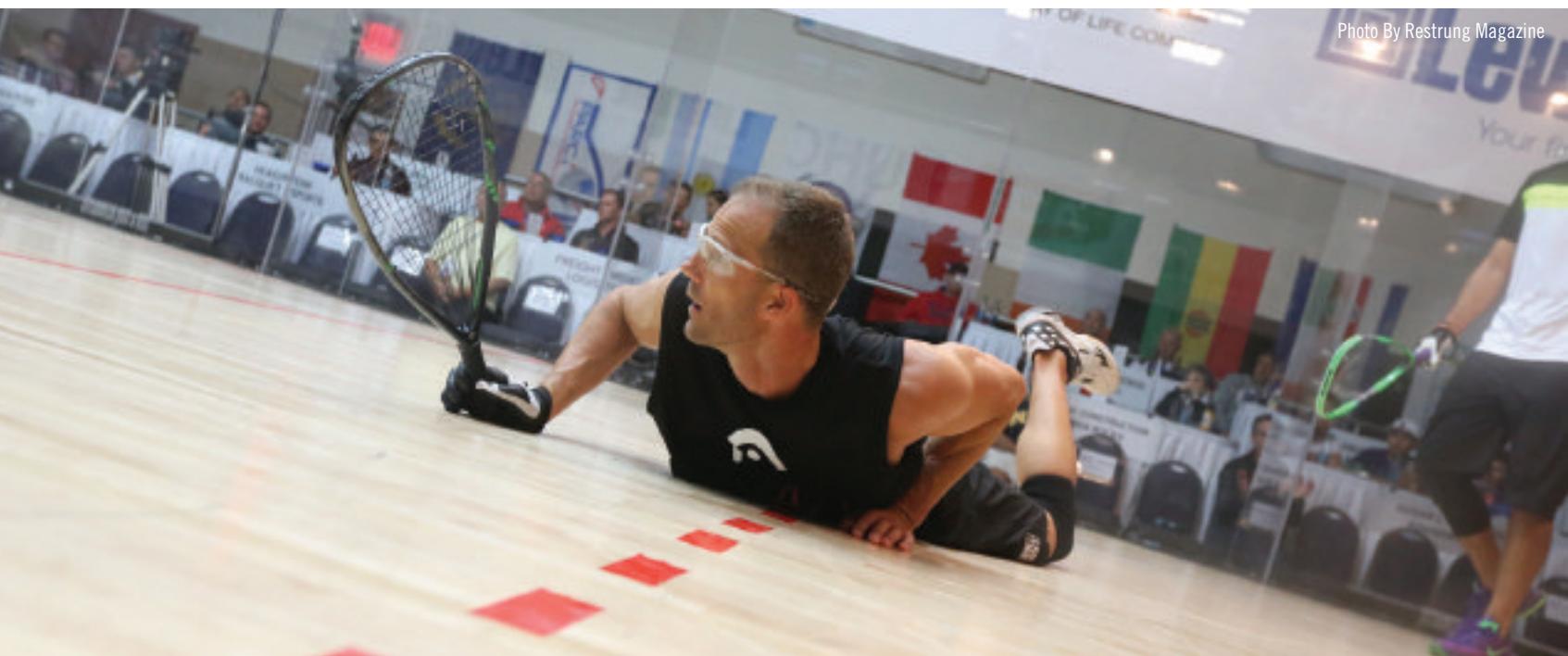
**Kane Waselenchuk (1:4 odds)** – The chances of Kane not winning the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN are slimmer than slim. Every time he steps foot on the portable court, his game rises to ridiculous levels. Not only does he win all his matches each year but he often makes the other top players look like amateurs. Of course, an upset is always possible but highly unlikely with Kane. If you want to see the game played at a level never before seen, pull up a seat for any of Kane's matches and enjoy the show. What he does on a racquetball court is truly incredible!

**Rocky Carson (6:1 odds)** – Rocky Carson will have to get through both De La Rosa (who beat him at the 2015 US OPEN) or Beltran and Kane to win the title, a tall order for sure. He usually plays well at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, however, he has taken some major league beatings from Kane throughout the past few years and the scar tissue on his brain is at epic levels. He has a strong chance to reach the finals but it would take a Herculean effort for him to upset Kane and win the tournament.

**Daniel De La Rosa (7:1 odds)** – Without a doubt De La Rosa is the fastest rising star on the IRT, capturing his first tour stop title three seasons ago. He is the first young player to come along with the kind of racquet skills that would allow him to compete with Kane on a regular basis. His pure athleticism and willingness to “dive like Croft” after every ball makes him extremely dangerous, and I give him a strong chance to reach the finals in 2017. An extremely well-mannered young man, much like the Rojas brothers, I feel like the missing ingredient may be a half-cup of nastiness. To beat the very top guys, you have to make them feel uncomfortable and often that means showing some toughness at critical times and NEVER backing down. We are watching Daniel develop into an elite force right in front of our eyes. His next step will be to “throw down the gloves” and brawl for the US OPEN title.

**Alvaro Beltran (7:1 odds)** – Beltran is always a tough out for anyone, including the top-ranked players. He has reached the Champion's Circle three times in Tier 1 events but this is really an amazingly low total for a player ranked so high for so many years. During the past year, Beltran has made a revived commitment to improve his fitness and the results have shown fruits on the court. However, it will take a lot of effort for Alvaro to win the title, and I wonder how much he will have left in the tank for the weekend if he succeeds, especially since he will be playing pro doubles as well. His “ace in the hole” will be the hundreds of Central and South American

Photo By Restrung Magazine



fans who will be pulling for him every step of the way. Listen for the “Vamos Beltran!” chants and the Davis Cup-like atmosphere every time he takes to the court.

**José Rojas (9:1 odds)** – José’s game has looked very good at times during the past year, and his historic US OPEN Doubles victory in 2016 could pay confidence dividends on the portable court in singles. His “go for broke” game style is thrilling to watch. He is not afraid of anyone on tour and likes to bring the heat. There is no question that José is still one of the best young players in the world, but time is starting to run out for him to make a serious run for the top. Is he ready for a career breakthrough at the 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN? A Grand Slam title could be the turning point he and his many fans have been waiting for.

#### PLAYERS TO WATCH:

**Jansen Allen** – Particularly known for his right-side doubles prowess, don’t discount Jansen as a singles player. He can flat roll the ball on the both sides of the court and will be a handful for anyone he plays in the Round of 16. In fact, he has quietly risen up to be one of the Top 6 ranked players on tour at the time of this writing. Getting away from having to play Kane in the quarterfinals would be a huge help, but that will depend upon his ranking in the weeks just prior to the US OPEN.

**Marco Rojas** – Markie will look to come in defending his Pro Doubles Win from last year’s US OPEN. In singles he has taken Rocky Carson down to the wire on multiple occasions only to come up a couple points short each time. He has the skills to make it to the top of the rankings, but he needs to “believe.” Perhaps his doubles victory last year is the stepping stone he needed.

**Alex Cardona/Bobby Horn/Mario Mercado** – Alex, Bobby, and Mario have been making names for themselves on the WRT with regular top finishes in those events. They have the skills to beat nearly anyone in the world, but just showing up at the US OPEN once a year to face the world’s best is not the ideal strategy. Both these players need to follow Jake Bredenbeck’s lead and play on the IRT full time, pay their dues, and learn what it takes to make it to the top. Both have the skills needed on the court and will be tough matches for anyone they play in the early rounds. Speaking of Bredenbeck, he would be near the top of my list for potential breakthrough winners at this year’s US OPEN if not for his shoulder injury. Hopefully he will be back to 100% at the 2017 US OPEN.

**IRT Pro Doubles** – It is difficult to write an accurate preview for this division as we often don’t know who is playing with whom until a week or two prior to the tourney. The million dollar question is “Who will Kane play with?” Kane with nearly anybody will be the odds-on favorite to win. However, last year’s champs, Markie and José Rojas, will surely attempt to defend their title. Will Rocky Carson play with Jose Diaz after winning National Doubles this year as a team, or will Diaz jump back to Bredenbeck if he is healthy? Lots of different combinations are possible. Add in all the other young talent on tour in various pairings and we have the makings of another thrilling IRT Pro Doubles showdown at the 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN.

In closing, the men of the IRT are ready to let it fly at the 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN. Get your seat early for the greatest show in sports and ENJOY!



Photo By Restring Magazine



Photo By Doug Gainin

#### Attending the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN as a VIP!

A very limited number of four-person courtside luxury Gold Boxes/Seats still remain for the 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN. The cost is \$2,800 and includes four Gold All-Access Credentials to the event. Single seats can be purchased for \$800 while supplies last. In addition to enjoying the pro matches from your private and comfortable courtside Gold Box/Seat, All-Access Gold Credential holders have unlimited access to the exclusive Pro/Gold Lounge throughout the event featuring complimentary catering (continental breakfast, lunch, and dinner), fruit and snacks, desserts, and beverages (beer, soda, juices, water, champagne, and wine) during all hours. Event sponsors, top-ranked men and women pro players, and Gold Box/Seat holders are the only VIPs permitted in the lounge. Treat yourself to the ultimate racquetball experience and reserve your Gold Box/Seat today!

If you are interested, please call (614) 890-6073 to check for current availability, or visit [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN-tickets.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN-tickets.com) to reserve your spot.



## 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN LPRT PREVIEW

By Doug Ganim

**T**he 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships are upon us and once again the women's pro singles and doubles competition will crown another champion. The odds-on favorite in singles will be World No.1 Paola Longoria from Mexico who will attempt to win her eighth US OPEN championship. However, there has been some major movement in the Top 8 rankings during the past year with lots of young new faces lining up to challenge Paola in the coming years.

It's hard to believe that Longoria could actually get better, but that is exactly what has happened in the last year. She not only wins every match she plays but nearly every match is an absolute beat-down. Much like Kane, her chances of NOT winning the US OPEN are slim.

**Paola Longoria (1:4 odds)** – Longoria, the No. 1 player in the world is the defending US OPEN Champion as well as the 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, and 2008 champion. She had another sensational performance during the LPRT 2016-17 tour, finishing at the top by a very wide margin. She also captured the #1 year-end ranking for the eighth time. Unless someone has elevated their game during the off-season and is prepared for a career-defining performance, look for Paola to take another step towards racquetball immortality and raise another US OPEN Championship trophy. *La Princesa no le será negado otro triunfo.*

**Samantha Salas (7:1)** – Coming off a historic US OPEN performance in 2016, finishing second in singles and first in doubles, you have to consider Samantha for an reasonable shot at winning her first US OPEN. In fact, she became the first player to beat Longoria in a prize money event in nearly two years by winning the season ending Longoria Challenge LPRT Grand Slam event in Mexico. She appears to be fully recovered from her major injury of two years ago. SALAS IS BACK!

**Rhonda Rajsich (8:1 odds)** – Despite her slide in the rankings during the past year, there is one thing Rhonda has that nobody else in the field does (other than Longoria): the title of US OPEN Champion. A four-time US OPEN Champion (2010, 2009, 2007, and 2003), Rajsich continues to amaze fans with spectacular dives and shots that are jaw dropping. When it comes to the US OPEN, experience on the stadium court and under the bright lights matters, so much so that in the last 21 years, only seven women players have been crowned Champion. Rhonda has the championship pedigree and still has the desire to win. She also defeated Longoria at the Pan American Racquetball Championships this past season, the first player to beat her in nearly 20 months! These facts dictate that I must give her odds better than higher-ranked but less-experienced players.

**Jessica Parrilla (9:1 odds)** – Jessica, the latest superstar from Mexico, has risen faster up the rankings than any other player on tour. At the time of this writing, she is the #4 ranked player in the world. She has a powerful game and represents the top of the class of up-and-coming new young players on tour. One advantage that Jessica has over some other top ranked players when it comes to a possible Longoria upset is that she has less scar tissue than others. What I mean by that is she has not endured years and years of Paola beatings that can often leave scars that are difficult to get past. At some point, there is going to be a new US OPEN Champion and I would put Jessica on the short list of players who have a shot to take over the mantle. Upsets happen. Maybe 2017 will be the year Jessica shocks the world and wins it all!

**Frédérique Lambert (10:1 odds)** – Frédérique has been on tour for a few years and has been a solid performer, but this past year she experienced a meteoric rise up the rankings. At the time of this writing she is the #2 ranked player in the world

and does have an outside shot at pulling the upset of Longoria. The reason I say this is, she HAS NO FEAR! She plays with both intensity and joy and possesses the athletic skills to win any event she enters. Canada



Photo By Restrung Magazine



Photo By Restrung Magazine

has not had a Top 2 ranked women's player since Christie Van Hees back in the early 90's. Frédérique is the new Canadian wonder!

**Alexandra Herrera (13:1)** – Another skyrocketing young player from Mexico, Alexandra has burst in to the top rankings in just the last year. She is the only left-hander in the Top 8 and therefore has a potential edge over the competition. Even Longoria has very little experience against lefties. At the time of this writing Herrera's ranking is #5 in the world. It is pretty clear that Mexico is in a great position to dominate professional women's racquetball for years to come!

**Cristina Amaya (13:1)** – Although ranked behind Alexandra at the time of this writing, I still give Cristina the same odds to win the US OPEN. The reason is her experience. She has beaten just about every top player on tour and has been competitive with Longoria in games from time to time.

**Veronica Sotomayor (15:1)** – Veronica does not play on the LPRT full time, but if she did, she would be ranked in the Top 5. Coached by the legendary Sudsy Monchik, she has developed into a lethal shooter who can take any player on tour down to the wire. With an artificially low ranking, it will be interesting to see which top player she draws in an early round. Someone is going to have bad luck and have to square off against Veronica early. Last year she made the semifinals with just such a ranking scenario. Don't be surprised by a repeat performance if her draw keeps her away from Longoria.

#### PLAYERS TO WATCH:

**Carla Muñoz** – A fearless young rock star from Chile, I really like her game. She goes about her business with supreme focus and has the skills to beat just about anybody.

**Michelle (Key) De La Rosa** – One of the top doubles players in the world, Michelle has improved her singles play and has incredible power on both sides of the court. She is a new mom, so not sure if she will have the time to train as in years past, but I would not be surprised if she showed up in great shape. She has that kind of dedication.

**Erika Manilla/Jordan Cooperider** – These two friends and frequent on-court foes are the best hope for the next generation of young American superstars. Both have power, speed, and confidence on the court. They have families that support their racquetball ambitions to the fullest. Look for these players to play well at the US OPEN this year. They could be the two finalists in 2021!

**LPRT Pro Doubles** – It is nearly impossible to predict who will play with whom for this division and therefore difficult to preview. However, it is fair to assume that Longoria and Salas will seek to defend their title. Anytime Longoria is on the court, she is the favorite. However, the chance for upset is higher in doubles than in singles. Therefore, expect close matches throughout the pro draw.

The LPRT is deeper and more exciting than at anytime in the last 20 years. It is truly an international affair with five different countries represented in the Top 8 rankings (at the time of this writing). The ladies are not only beautiful but they are incredible athletes playing racquetball at an extremely high level. Make sure you catch as many LPRT matches as you can at the 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN!



Photo By Roby Partovich

## PRO-AM DOUBLES FOR CHARITY



Photo By Roby Partovich

Want to treat yourself to an incredible racquetball experience while at the same time supporting world-renowned children's charities? On Wednesday evening, October 4th, at the 2017 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, 32 lucky amateurs will team up with the top stars on the IRT and LPRT for a special Pro-Am Doubles event. A \$325 donation gets you into the draw until 32 commitments are received. The evening features free food and beverages, an autographed racquet from your pro partner, and a complimentary photo as well. All of the proceeds will be donated to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and JDRF.

Although this event has sold out each of the last 21 years, at the time of this writing there are still a handful of spots left. If you are interested in participating, call (719) 635-5396 ext. 0 to register, or visit [www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com](http://www.UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com) to download a registration form.

# Q&A - Some of Otto's Most Popular Questions and Answers over the Years!

by Otto Dietrich, USA Racquetball National Rules Commissioner

**Jim W. wondered:** I know the receiving line wasn't always there on the court. When did that change?

**Otto responded:** Regarding the receiving line, as I recall, it was I who first proposed that line on the floor back in the 1980's. Many years prior to that, there used to be a 6-inch high line on each side wall exactly five feet behind the short line that defined an "imaginary" line across the court at that same point. I proposed actually drawing the line on the floor from one 6" line to the other to more clearly define what had previously been only an imaginary line. Those 6" lines on the walls even existed in handball.

**Dave asked:** During a recent doubles match, the server basically stood to the left side and served down the middle to the receiving team. The receiver on the right side initially thought about returning the serve, then suddenly said to his partner "yours." That partner, who was effectively standing behind the server (again, the server was positioned legally in the serving zone but skewed left), suddenly exclaimed "screen serve." Of course, this resulted in discussion as to whether "screen" was the proper call. I realize there could be any number of variables, but could you please elaborate your view of what would constitute a screen in doubles? In my view, the rules as written seem to demur a bit and do not specifically speak to the doubles situation.

**Otto answered:** In doubles, teams must work together to win a rally. While it sounds like one of those receiving players may have been screened, the other one probably wasn't, but opted, instead, to let

his "screened" partner take the ball and then claim that "they" couldn't see the ball. Bad choice! Tough luck! No screen serve in this case because in my estimation the player could have easily returned the ball; he just didn't! Sounds more like poor teamwork than a screen serve. The receiving team should re-think their strategy for returning such serves.

that. So, I guess that means it is legal. But, is it done on every serve or just by accident or perhaps just every once in a while? Of course, it might be damaging the floor, which would not be good. It also might be distracting to the receiver. I'd really have to know more about the practice to address how I would handle it.



Men's #2 Singles Action at the USAR National Intercollegiate Championships

Photo By Gallemore Photography

**Bill asked:** During a serve attempt, the server's racquet hits the floor prior to the ball. Is this a fault serve or is the serve legal?

**Otto answered:** Quite frankly, there is nothing in the rulebook that addresses

**Lisa asked:** If a serve is obviously going to be long, but the receiver hits the ball before it reaches the backwall, is the ball in play or is it considered long and the server takes his second serve?

## DO YOU HAVE A RULES/REFEREEING QUESTION?

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

## Always Play by the Rules

... I encourage you to go online where you can find, review, and/or download them especially to your Smartphone – at: [teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules](http://teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules).



**Otto answered:** Such a serve is NOT technically long until it actually touches the backwall without the receiver having touched it. So, if the receiver hits the served ball before it hits the backwall, then that ball is "in play."

**John asked:** When a ball comes off the front wall and I want to take a shot off of the backwall, but the ball hits my opponent before I swing, do I get the point? Also, when a ball comes off of the front wall that I swing at and miss, but then the ball hits my opponent -- what happens next? Is it my point or is it a hinder on me?

**Otto answered:** Anytime that a player is touched by a ball that he (or his partner in doubles) has last hit before the ball bounces on the floor a second time, he loses that rally immediately. He cannot claim to be hindered by his opponent because it is not the opponent's turn to hit the ball. The very same is true if you swing and miss as long as the ball is still in play (has not yet bounced on the floor a second time).

**Joe asked:** In a self-officiated game, if a long serve occurs, does the receiver have to call the serve as long before swinging at the ball? Alternatively, can the receiving player ignore a long serve and hit the ball after it has rebounded from the back wall and hit the floor, i.e., ignore the long serve fault and possibly score a point? Also in the case of a long serve, if the receiver swings at but does not make contact with the ball either before or after calling the serve long, is the long serve call, and therefore the fault, still valid?

**Otto responded:** Whether self-officiated or not, any serve that actually hits the back wall before it hits the floor is immediately long and therefore no longer playable. There is no option to play it once it becomes long. The receiver can swing at it before and until it becomes long without

any penalty unless he touches the ball, in which case it becomes a good serve and he either returns it to the front wall or loses the rally for failing to do that. In this case, the serve never became long, thus there is no fault.

**Bev S. asked:** In tennis there is a rule about where to place the vibration dampener and how many vibration dampeners a player can have on their racquet... Does racquetball have such a rule and what is the rule about placement and number of vibration dampeners on a racquet?

**Otto responded:** There is no such rule/limit in racquetball nor, in my opinion, is there any need for one unless, of course, you suggest it and propose a rule change to create it. I can't imagine why someone would put it somewhere on the racquet's strings where it might interfere with the resulting shot.

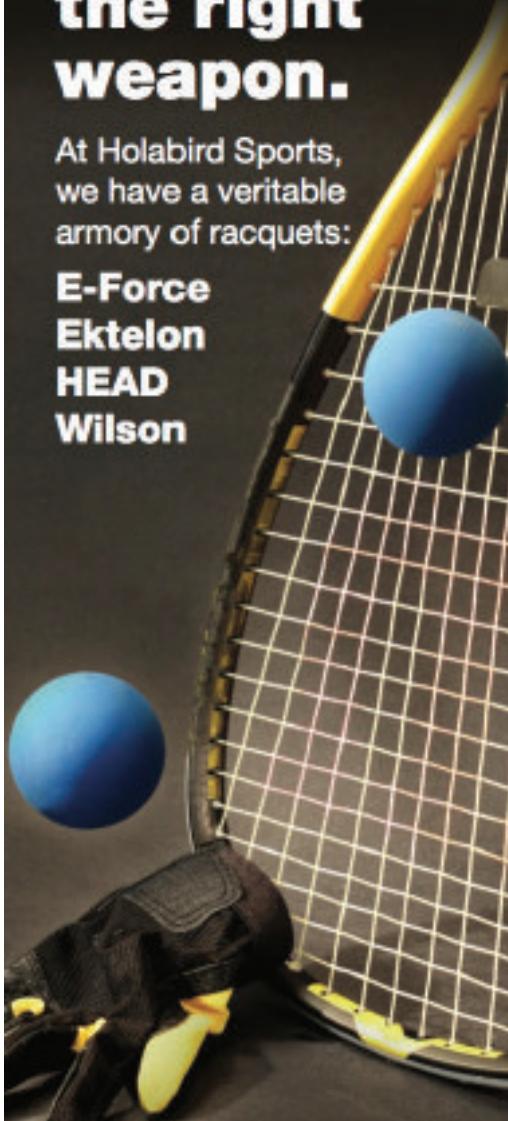
**Gary asked:** If you have low blood sugar from type 1 diabetes while playing and need the time to bring your levels back up, is this considered an injury time out?

**Otto's response:** First, the answer is no; that is not an injury caused by some type of contact. But, what I would do is discuss this issue with both your opponent and the referee before the match begins. I suspect that most would try to accommodate your need, within reason. Be sure to check and adjust your levels right before play begins. What actions are normally needed to get your levels back to the right level? If they take less than 30 seconds, then just use a regular timeout or take consecutive timeouts.

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# CONTINUING THE Making of a Champion



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

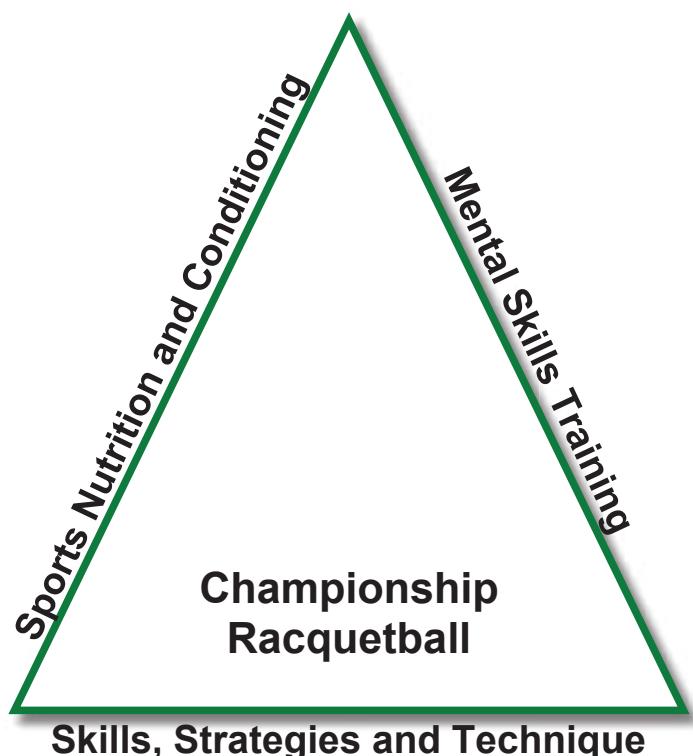
**L**et's continue "Making You a Champion" using the core principles of "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" as you build your championship racquetball game one assessment at a time.

In this issue I am going to discuss "How to Become a Champion," something people ask me about all the time.

Becoming a champion begins with a goal and then you add hard work, persistence, training, conditioning, skills, strategies, and passion. As you get better and better in your sport, you become self-motivated and start to see all the benefits of your hard work. But that is the easy part. All champions own the physical skills in order to get to a certain level. The new champion also has to own a repertoire of mental skills and tools that he can use on and off the court. Mental preparation is like a business plan that has to be followed precisely in order to guarantee consistency and competency to realize the desired end result. Once physical skills are in place, it becomes a mental game. Athletes need a 24-hour preparation plan to address diet, hydration, visualization, affirmations, and belief systems. All the mental work is done before the event so that you can simply drop into "The Zone" (mind/body connection) when you walk onto the court. The ideal performance state is playing from your heart and your gut. You are on automatic pilot and playing in peak form.

A champion has to learn on-court rituals when things don't go well and have back-up plans and strategies to re-enter "The Zone." Rituals include physical relaxation techniques, mental imagery, emotional control, and renewing affirmations and cue words. There is always something you can do in order to get back into your game state. The more skills, strategies, and tools an athlete possesses, the greater his/her success rate.

## RACQUETBALL SUCCESS TRIANGLE



The "Racquetball Success Triangle" (see diagram) consists of Sports Nutrition/Conditioning, Mental Skills Training and all the Skills, Strategies, and Techniques of your sport. A triangle is NOT A TRIANGLE unless all three sides are connected. Champions like Rocky Carson, Paola Longoria, and Kane Waselenchuk are impeccable with what they eat and drink as well as with how they rest, work out, train and visualize. It takes a daily commitment to reach their goal.

This formula for success begins with your commitment and desire to be the best athlete you can be. It addresses diet, sleep patterns, work/rest schedule, conditioning, on-court practice, mental skills training, and periodization of your racquetball season. It is a sport/business plan that leads to success. Always pause along the way to re-evaluate, create, and adjust in order to reach your goal.

Ask yourself, "Do you want to become a champion? How hard are you willing to work on and off the court?"

See it and believe it before you can achieve it! If you choose to follow this process, you are taking steps to living your personal best life. You will now be "Living The Life of a Champion!"

For more details on "How to Become a Champion" see my book, "Championship Racquetball."

**Fran Davis** coaches Paola Longoria (6X #1 LPRT, 5X World Champion, 4X Pan American Champion, 7X US Open Champion), Rocky Carson (#2 IRT, 5X World Champion, 2X Pan American Champion, US Open Champion), and junior sensations Jordan Cooperrider (Junior National Champion & USA Junior National Team), Wayne Antone (Junior National Champion & USA Junior National Team), and Mitchell Turner (Junior National Champion & USA Junior National Team). Fran's achievements include USAR Hall of Fame 2004, Woman of the Year 2009, former U.S. National Team Coach, and Master Professional (USAR-IP).

# Championship Racquetball

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### Video

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- Learn the perfect strokes
- Improve shot selection/court position
- Game plans/Strategies a must
- Be aggressive on the return of serve
- Perfect practice makes perfect -

### Camps

- 13+ Hours of Instruction and Court Time
- Physical and Mental aspects of the game
- Lectures/Playing/Critiquing
- Video Tape Analysis / Play the Pro
- Camp Manual/ T-Shirt / Penn Racquetballs

### Books

- Core Principles discussed
- Advance your skills, tactics and toughness for a winning game
- Targets Intermediate players and above

Taylor Knoth  
Jr. World Champion

Jason Mannino  
#1 Pro Player 2003

Rocky Carson  
#1 Pro Player 2008

Sharon Jackson  
Jr. Nat'l Champion

Paola Longoria  
2X #1 Pro Player

Sudsy Monchik  
5X #1 Pro Player

### Fran's Credentials

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

### Camp Schedule:

#### Weekend Camps 2017

Jun 16-18	San Francisco, CA
Sep 8-10	Claremont, CA
Oct 20-22	Portland, OR
TBA	San Antonio/Dallas, TX
TBA	Chicago, IL or OH
TBA	Denver, CO
TBA	St. Louis, MO
TBA	New England or PA

#### Week Long Fantasy Camps 2017

SOUTHERN, CA CAMP - Jul 30-Aug 4 (w/Rocky Carson...Intermediate to Advance Camp)
ARUBA CAMP - TBA 2017 (Caribbean Island...Intermediate to Advanced Camp)
MEXICO CAMP - TBA 2017 (Mexico Resort...Intermediate to Advanced Camp)

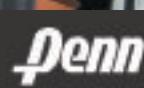
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# WHERE ARE THEY NOW? -- TONI BEVELOCK DELOS SANTOS

By Aimee Ruiz

Photos Courtesy of Toni Bevelock Delos Santos



**W**here Are They Now? is a new column in *Racquetball* magazine that will feature past pros from both the men's and women's tours throughout the years. We'll interview them and see what they have been up to since they stepped away from playing professionally. We'll also see what they think of today's game and the players who are currently competing.

Our third interview is with former U.S. National Singles & Doubles Champion Toni Bevelock Delos Santos. Let's check in with Toni:

**When was your last year on tour and what have you been up to since then?** My last year on the tour was 1991. I had a shoulder injury and decided that it was time to move on. I owned and operated two successful Pro Shops inside of Racquetball World (Santa Ana and Fullerton, California) for five years. I then entered the sales arena working for Gargoyles eyewear and then Lebhar-Friedman Publishing Company. I got married in 2002 and decided to stay at home and raise my two sons, Kai and Dylan. I continued my education and became a Certified Sport Psychology Coach and started 90% Mental in 2013. I still work out a lot, and I love to ride my mountain bike, hike, and cook!



*Toni Bevelock*

**MARTY HOGAN**  
RACQUETBALL  
1 Division of Pro-Kennex

**Can you tell us a bit about your family? How old are your children?**

**Are they into any sports?** My husband and I just celebrated our 15-year wedding anniversary. Kai is 13 and loves playing sports! His All-Star baseball team won the California State Championship in 2015. He played lacrosse, flag football, and is now passionate about basketball. Dylan is 11 and he played tackle football, lacrosse, and is now also passionate about basketball! Watching them play sports is my absolute favorite thing to do!

**You have your own business, 90% Mental. Can you tell us a little about that and how it correlates to racquetball (or any sport for that matter)?**

90% Mental is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. All the challenges that I faced have been invaluable in working with athletes and coaches who are trying to achieve success. I teach them the mental tools to perform at their best, reach their goals, and enjoy their sport!

**Who was a player that you looked up to when making your start on the tour?** It would have to be Lynn Adams because she was mentally tough, very aggressive, and always determined to win.



**Do you watch any of the current women's pros play, and what do you find different about the game now than when you played?** I have gone to several pro-stops over the past three years, and the game seems a lot faster than when we played. When I played it was more "serve and shoot" and now there are a lot more rallies. They also dress way cuter than we did -- we had to wear collared shirts! At least I could match my neon pink nails and strings! LOL!

**Is there anyone in today's game you are most impressed with or who has a game style that is similar to yours?** I am most impressed with Rhonda. She is by far one of the best female athletes I have ever watched. She is aggressive, strong, and can kill the ball from everywhere. Her ability to get the ball is insane! I did give Rhonda racquetball lessons when she was a kid in Phoenix, just saying!

**You have been all over the world playing for Team USA in international competitions. What was one of your fondest memories representing Team USA or one of your favorite countries to visit?** I loved traveling with the U.S. Team! My fondest memory is all of the incredible people I got to meet and hang out with, including Coach Winter-

ton, Ed Martin, and Larry Liles! We shared a bond that is indescribable, and those were some of the best times of my life. My favorite countries were the South American countries because they were so fun and passionate about the sport. I speak Spanish, so I always had a great cheering section.

**Your racquetball career is very impressive. Which of your accomplishments meant the most to you?** It was winning the U.S. National Singles Title in 1988. I moved from Memphis to Phoenix to train with my best friend Jack Nolan (who I met on the US Team). I hired a personal trainer and worked day and night to reach my goal of becoming the National Champion. It was truly a dream come true.

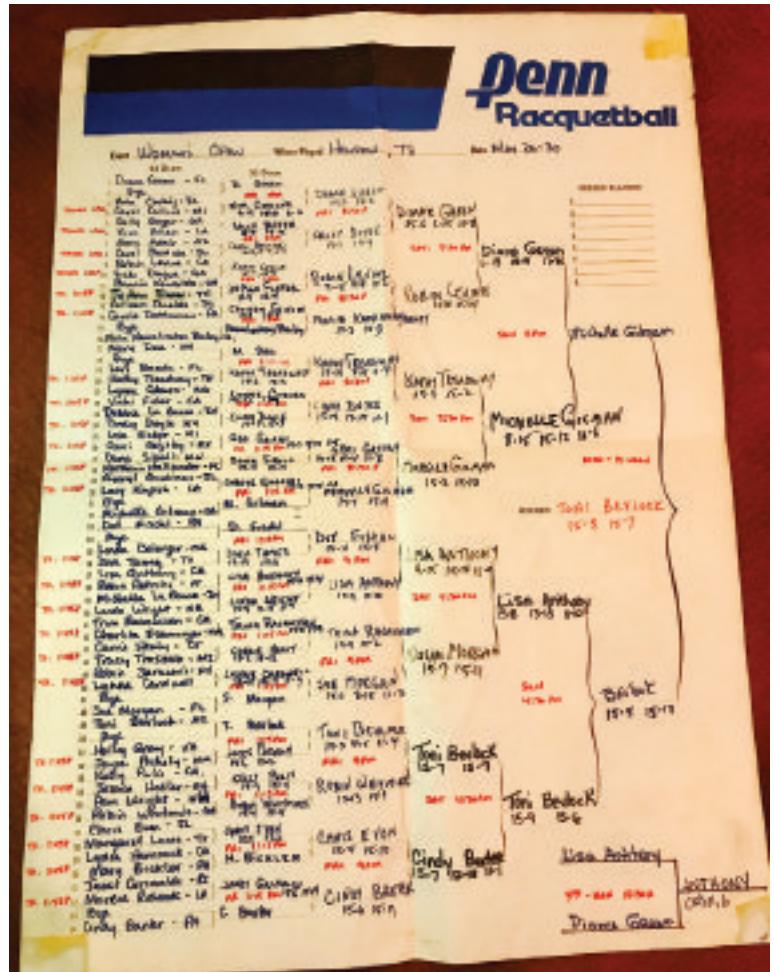
**You're an accomplished singles and doubles player. Which did you enjoy more?** I loved playing both! Doubles was really fun because you could get so pumped with your partner! When I played with Malia Bailey, she was so calm and I was all hyped up, so we were a good mix. I loved playing mixed doubles with Dan Obremski and Andy Roberts.



**Do you play at all now, and do you miss the competition?** I don't play at all due to my shoulder injury, and I really miss the adrenaline rush of hitting backhand splats from 40 feet! I also miss just getting on the court and hitting.

**Is there anyone you still communicate with from your days on tour?** I still keep in touch with Chris Evin, and now with Facebook, I keep in touch with a lot more people.

**What would you say to someone who wants to break into that next level and begin playing the pro tour full time? Any words of wisdom?** My words of wisdom would be to always follow your dreams and passion. If you want it badly enough, you will work the hardest and find a way to accomplish your goals.



Drawsheet from the 1988 AARA National Singles Women's Open Singles Division

## Toni's Highlights

- 1983 AARA National Mixed Doubles Champion
- 1985 National Women's Open Doubles Champion
- 1985 National Mixed Doubles Champion
- 1986, 1988 IRF World Championships, Women's Singles - Silver Medalist
- 1987, 1988 Tournament of Americas, Women's Singles - Silver Medalist
- 1988 AARA National Women's Open Singles Champion
- 1988 Tournament of the Americas, Open Doubles Champion
- 1988 AARA National Women's Open Doubles Champion
- 1990 IRF PARC/Penn Tournament of the Americas, Women's Doubles Champion
- 1988 AARA/IOC Athlete of the Year
- 1988 Sullivan Award Nominee, Best Amateur Athlete in the United States
- Memphis State University four-year scholarship winner; #1 Ranked Player, Memphis State Racquetball Team
- Selected as first female to join the ProKennex Professional Advisory Staff for Marty Hogan Racquetball



By Terry Rogers

**National Doubles Update:**

The Military Racquetball Federation's Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinic participants and coaches from the Phoenix and Prescott Veteran's Administration made the trip to Arizona State University to watch National Doubles and pick up some pointers. They were preparing for their competition, RRC Racquetball Challenge, at National Singles in May. The group was treated to lunch and a surprise visit from Rhonda Rajsich, one of MRF's program supporters and long-time friends.

**3WallBall Championships:**

The MRF will once again be a part of the 3WallBall Championships held at The Stratosphere Las Vegas in September, featuring an up/down wheelchair division with players from across the US. Kicking off the event will be a great draw for the ProAm Doubles. The National Guard will be onsite with a vehicle and to support the MRF activities. This is an awesome event you do not want to miss!

For more information about the MRF, visit our website at <http://www.militaryracquetball.com> or our Facebook page at Military-Racquetball-Federation.

Above: RRC Participants &amp; Coaches

Photo By Malia Bailey

Right: MRF at 3WallBall Championships

Photo By Roby Partovich

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# Dynamic Duo Is Driving Force Behind Ohio IRT Tournament

By Jim Medina

**A** dog seeking attention led to a chance encounter on a beautiful beach at Punta Guiones in Costa Rica, where dreams apparently do come true.

"It sounds pretty cheesy, but that's how it happened," Fabrizio Mora said in describing how he met his wife, Angie Ledgerwood.

He was a surfer/racquetball player who noticed the dog that belonged to Ledgerwood's friend. "He asked if I spoke Spanish," Ledgerwood said. Turns out she does.

Today, Mora and Ledgerwood — who have been married 14 years — are the dynamic force that started the Raising Some Racquet for Kids racquetball tournament nine years ago, with the goal of helping Kappa Delta sorority raise money to prevent child abuse.

Ledgerwood, a clinical psychologist, has been a dedicated member of the sorority since she was a freshman in college.

As for the tournament — the second as a men's professional International Racquetball Tour (IRT) Tier 1 Pro Stop — they both stress that it has been a collaborative effort, citing the tremendous help of co-director Charles Knight, Kappa Delta, countless volunteers, dedicated sponsors and, for the past four years, the IRT. This year's event was held March 23-26 at The Heights Racquetball and Fitness Club in Huber Heights, Ohio.

Now the mother of their two-year-old daughter, Francesca ("Chessy" for short), Ledgerwood, with the help of her mom, continues to coordinate the meals for all the players during the tournament and run the popular silent auction that this year featured Cincinnati Reds VIP tickets, sports memorabilia, "man-cave" gear, clothing, gift baskets, and other items, according to Mora.

A self-described "middle person" who makes sure the tournament runs smoothly, Mora credits his wife for juggling her busy schedule to help with everything and Knight for handling the fundraising.

"We make it work somehow," Ledgerwood said in a telephone interview, pausing at times to sweet talk Chessy in Spanish and English. "Fabrizio and I are a good team. There's a lot of coordinating of schedules."

In many ways, the racquetball community mirrors a family. "That's what I like about racquetball tournaments: people gathering and spending a couple of days together," Mora said. "Everyone in the racquetball community is super nice. That's part of it, the personal aspect to it. Not only the competition but meeting with your friends who you see only at tournaments. So it's really cool."

The camaraderie is a big plus for Ledgerwood, who doesn't play



Raising Some Racquet for Kids Tournament Directors Fabrizio Mora and Angie Ledgerwood (husband/wife) with #2-ranked IRT player Rocky Carson and #3 Daniel De La Rosa after the 2017 tournament. Carson beat De La Rosa 12-10, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8 to repeat as champion on Saturday, March 25 at The Heights Racquetball and Fitness Center in Huber Heights, Ohio.

racquetball and seldom goes to tournaments. She enjoys the people and gushes about the positive feedback. Players are happy knowing that if food is served while they're playing that there will be plenty left when they are done, she said.

"And players are always asking on Sunday how much I think we raised with the silent auction or the total over the weekend," she added. "There are people who really care about the fact that we're raising money and it's for child abuse prevention. I really appreciate that people feel like it's a good cause and are curious and want to help."

Mora said it made sense to combine his ambition to run a racquetball tournament with Ledgerwood's passion for working with Kappa Delta to prevent child abuse.

However, the tournament is a major project. "Oh my god, I love it," Mora said. "It's one of those things that takes a lot of work and effort. And when you're done, you say I'm not going to do it again. But two days later, you're already thinking about the next year. It's fun and painful at the same time."

Mora, who admits he's a little shy, once played racquetball on Costa Rica's national team, "but I don't like to make too much fuss about it."

Asked if he's going to teach Chessy to play, he said: "Yeah, I'm hoping that she learns. As soon as she's old enough to hold a racquet, I think she's going to start coming with me."

He quickly walks that back a little bit, though. "Obviously, whatever she likes," he said. "There are always other sports. It opens more doors. But even with racquetball, she can get scholarships to different schools."

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# NEW JERSEY OPEN A BIG SUCCESS



By T. J. Baumbaugh

Photos By Restring Magazine



L PRT #1 ranked tour player Paola Longoria earned her 80th pro title in Warren, New Jersey, in early March. The Green Brook Buick GMC New Jersey Open, presented by WearRollout.com, was the host event for the top player's latest achievement. Longoria won every match in three games, allowing only single digits from her competitors. Longoria, with first-time partner Gabriela Martinez, also took the doubles title after besting the team of Rhonda Rajsich and Sheryl Lotts in the final.

Another outstanding performance of the weekend was by Cristina Amaya who made her second trip to a pro final. Following her upset of #2 ranked player Frédérique Lambert in four games, Amaya, who was ranked #6 prior to the NJO, moved up to the #5 tour spot. She has made quite a comeback after being sidelined with an injury most of last season.

Always a popular event, the New Jersey Open attracts a large crowd of pro and amateur players. Rollout really found a niche when it comes to running events. Jonathan Clay, Carolyn Clay, and Meredith Gilbert make every effort to impress while finding creative ways to entertain tournament attendees. Players snapped photos at photo stations and enjoyed plenty of great food while wearing their very cool Rollout tournament shirt. Title sponsor Green Brook Buick GMC also brought a variety of

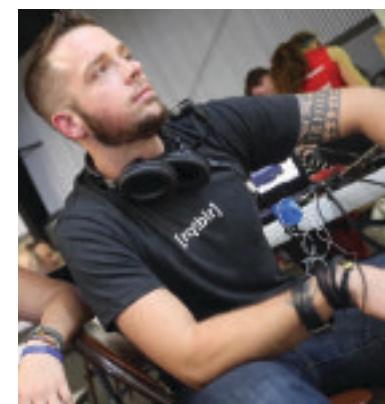
new cars to the Racquet Club of Warren parking lot so that players could check out some of the sponsor's latest and greatest vehicles. Take a look at the website to see who drove off with a new car at a Rollout event: [www.rolloutbevents.com](http://www.rolloutbevents.com).

## LPRT Adds New Team Members

The LPRT continues to grow. Not only do we have an incredibly talented group of women athletes, we have a strong team behind the scenes. Meet our two newest members:

### **Jerry "J" Josey Jr. - IT and Livestream Coordinator**

Racquetball is a family affair for Josey; he's been around the sport his entire life. He plays daily with his brother, and both of his parents are former state champs (they have been playing a combined 75 years). Josey is about to start his third year as President of the South Carolina Racquetball Association.

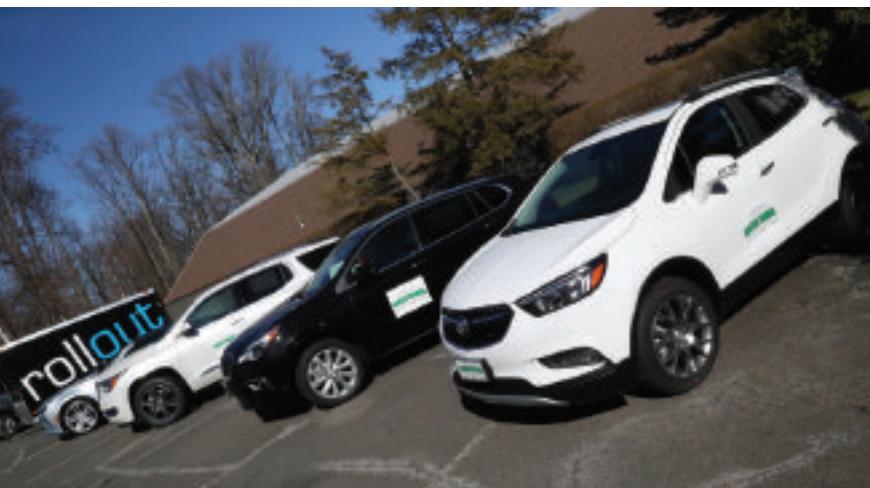


Josey has a deep passion for building organizations from the ground up. He is, and has always been, self-employed. He started his first business when he was 17. Says Josey, "I've been turning computers inside out since I was six years old. I currently operate an IT business as well as a sport management/apparel business." He attended The University of South Carolina where he earned an MBA.

Josey donates his entrepreneurial spirit and a lot of his time giving back to racquetball. He also supports cancer research charities (his mother is a cancer survivor). Josey is a good fit for the LPRT and brings extensive knowledge of computers. He states, "I'm thoroughly enjoying running the live stream operation and taking care of all of the LPRT's technology needs. You know, traveling around the world with these talented ladies isn't such a bad gig." Josey is from Beaufort, South Carolina, and currently lives in Columbia, South Carolina.

### **Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez - Director, Marketing and Development**

You may have seen this guy, or at least his camera, courtside at the US Open. Ramirez has been capturing racquetball in action at this major event every year since 2011 and probably has the most extensive cultural snapshot of the sport. He has produced work for major racquet manufacturers and organizations (USAR, IRT,





WRT, LPRT), as well as for *Racquetball* magazine.

Even if you haven't seen Ramirez' incredible collection of photographs, then you have probably read his publication, *Restrung* magazine. Ramirez said, "I started *Restrung* thinking it was more of a diversity project: indoor, outdoor,

group assessment. I thought it would make a cool lifestyle magazine for alternate racquet sports like squash, badminton, racquetball, etc. Hence the crossover name, *Restrung*." *Restrung* magazine was started in 2011.

Ramirez' accomplishments are not just limited to courtside action. He has been competing in one-wall racquetball for 20 years, and his list of achievements is extensive. In 2015, he earned the honor of being the first inductee into the World Outdoor Racquetball Hall of Fame: <http://worldoutdoorracquetball.net/worhof/inductees/freddy-ramirez>.

Ramirez lives in New York City.



The Women's Pro Doubles finals at the New Jersey Open featured Rhonda Rajsich and Sheryl Lotts versus Paola Longoria and Gaby Martinez

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## 2017 New York Life Insurance Beach Bash Presented by Splathead – Hollywood, Florida

By Cyrus Chinoy  
Photos by Belinda Dettman



Women's Pro Singles Champion Regina Franco in action

The time of year had come where racquetball players took a break from the mostly cold winter weather around the country and looked forward to traveling down to the beautiful and sunny eastern side of the great State of Florida.

Just like a flock of birds flying to get away for the winter, a combination of 226 of the greatest professional and amateur racquetball players in the world landed in their own fantasy land of Hollywood, Florida, to participate in the ever-popular New York Life Insurance Beach Bash Presented by Splathead, held from Thursday, March 23rd through Sunday, March 26th, 2017.

Hollywood, Florida, is nestled between Ft. Lauderdale and Miami and located in the heart of Hollywood Beach. The historic Garfield Street Racquet

Sports was the perfect location for the event to be held, where competitors battled for four days on the pristine one-wall courts. Legendary players of racquetball, paddleball, and handball have graced their presence at the Garfield Street courts and this year was no different, as an even-better level of players and skill levels participated.

Arrival of the players started as early as Saturday and continued through Wednesday, as many returning players reacquainted themselves with the one-wall game while many first-time players were intrigued to find out what all the mystique was all about. There were a variety of indoor and outdoor players who participated in the Beach Bash ranging from one-wall, three-wall (short and long wall), and four-wall, but they all had one mission and goal in mind to remember: JUST HIT THE FRONT WALL!

With the sunshine glistening across the surface of the Atlantic Ocean and warm temperatures forecasted for the coming days, Beach Bash officially kicked off on Thursday with a variety of matches for both the men's and women's divisions with players of various skill levels and experience competing. The players were in full combat mode and would do anything to put themselves in a position to win points, no matter who their opponent was.

Play continued on Friday and Saturday with skill levels in singles, doubles, and mixed divisions that exhibited spirited and

competitive play amongst all players. The sound of the ever-familiar smack of the racquetball against the front wall rang out as players used their quick reflexes to quickly end rallies with a kill shot or to accurately place the ball where their opponents would have difficulty returning it.

Unfortunately, during the tournament Mother Nature decided that she wanted to literally "rain on the parade" and decided to cause momentary pauses during the action. It didn't bother the racquetball family because while waiting for the courts to be dried off, it gave participants an opportunity to catch up with friends they hadn't seen in a while as well as meet new ones. Players also took this time to get something to eat or drink at local hotspots like The Taco Spot and Florio's of Little Italy Pizza Place. To pass the time even further, some players entertained others with Latin dance moves to make an already exciting event even more of a party.

Everyone knows that huge events like this certainly take a lot of planning and teamwork to make sure everything runs smoothly. A giant THANK YOU to Tournament Director Vic Leibofsky and his team who coordinated a wonderful tournament that ran fairly smoothly, even with multiple rain delays. Vic did a great job communicating to all of the players what was going on and came up with a game plan to help move all of the games along as the weather changed so everyone would have a heads-up of the situation at hand. Vic had a great team of people behind him to make sure the Beach Bash ran well. A big shout out to Patti Leibofsky, Jen O'Meara, Seran Ramkissoon, Justin Cooklin, Rick Bernstein, Harvey "GrillMaster" Bernstein, Marcos Gravy, Roy Hernandez, Rob Mijares,



Hale Sakoff, and all of the other volunteers who assisted to make this tournament special for all of the players. Vic should certainly be commended for all of his hard work and dedication in coordinating such a wonderful event. Thank you, Vic. A job well done!

Standout performances were found in all divisions, but the first to come to mind was in the Men's Pro Singles finals with Robert Sostre, the two-time defending Beach Bash champion and arguably the greatest one-wall player to ever live, matching up against world class paddleball and racquetball player Andrew Price who had never played one-wall before.

The match started well for Robert as he used all of his knowledge and a variety of shots to keep Andrew's speed and accurate shot selection to a minimum. Not to be outdone, Andrew got into a comfortable rhythm of his own, using deadly accurate serves to get himself back in the match and trying to keep Robert guessing as to what he was going to do next. In the end, Robert's experience and knowledge of the one-wall game helped him prevail to his third consecutive Men's Singles Pro title with a final score of 21-18. What a battle between these great competitors!

In the Women's Pro Singles, a newcomer to Beach Bash, Regina Franco, gained attention with her impressive play on the courts, her great serves, and accurate ground strokes. She comes from a talented racquetball family; her brother and sister were also participating in Beach Bash. In fact, Regina had to battle her sister Maritza in her pool en route to winning the Women's Singles Pro crown. This isn't the last time you will hear

from Regina and the rest of the Franco family -- they are only going to get better over the coming years.

The Men's and Women's Pro Doubles were just as exciting, with Robert Sostre and Freddy Ramirez capturing the Men's Doubles title this year in a great match vs. Richard Miller and Nelson Deida. Both New York teams are very familiar with each other and always provide an exciting experience for the audience. Robert and Freddy took the title in two games, 15-10, 15-12.

On the Women's side, the experienced team of Anita Maldonado and Jasmine Suarez used their great serves, court positioning, and teamwork to defeat the up-and-coming Franco sisters, Regina and Maritza. Anita and Jasmine prevailed in both games, 15-3, 15-4.

Beach Bash players are home in their respective states and countries, but footprints on the sand have been left to remind players that they were here. The beauty lies in the fact that when players arrive at Beach Bash next time, new footprints will be formed, creating new memories and new friendships.



All smiles from the ladies at the 2017 New York Life Insurance Beach Bash Presented by Splathead



Brian Romero in action at the 2017 New York Life Insurance Beach Bash Presented by Splathead.



Men's Pro Doubles Champions Freddy Ramirez & Robert Sostre with their newest fan



# CALENDAR of EVENTS

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

Date	Event	City	State	Location	Email
July 1-2	Pickleboat Shootout at UCF	Orlando	FL	UCF Racquetball	ucfrball@gmail.com
July 8	Courthouse of Blues	Flywood	MS	The Courthouse Racquet and Fitness	crushcdbaker1@gmail.com
July 6-9	WOR CHAMPIONSHIPS	Huntington	CA	Marina Park	geoff25@icloud.com
Juy 8-9	July Triple Crown Racquetball Shootout	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club	leo@themav.com
July 12-15	NMRA International Championship	West Allis	WI	Wisconsin Athletic Club	cindy.tilbury@att.net
July 14-16	IRT Georgia Games	Atlanta	GA	Recreation ATL	info@recreationatl.com
July 14-16	The Rumble in Reno Shootout	Reno	NV	Sport West Athletic Club	jt5816@hotmail.com
July 14-16	Stribling Summer Open	Charleston	SC	St. Andrews Family Fitness Plus	events@scrball.com
July 21-22	Sunflower State Games	Topeka	KS	Downtown Topeka YMCA	lisacarlton55@gmail.com
July 20-23	Virginia Commonwealth Games	Lynchburg	VA	Liberty University - LaHaye	rolloutva@gmail.com
July 21-23	Rocky Mountain State Games	Colorado Springs	CO	YMCA Downtown Colorado Springs	eddiemerith@earthlink.net
July 21-23	Court Sport Diva Invitational	Corpus Christi	TX	Corpus Christi Athletic Club	prostopracquetsports@gmail.com
July 21-23	Florida Open	Sarasota	FL	Sarasota Family YMCA	auchad99@hotmail.com
July 23	Patriot Outreach Fundraiser	Walnut Creek	CA	Renaissance ClubSport	rballchick@gmail.com
July 29	3rd Annual ETCASA Shootout	Longview	TX	Parkway Fitness	mccoymitchell11@gmail.com
July 29	Can you stand the heat?	St Clair Shores	MI	Saint Clair Shores Outdoor Courts	racketboat1@aol.com
July 28-30	Fairfield Aloha Shootout	Fairfield	CA	In-Shape Sport: Holiday	ellistyle@comcast.net
July 28-30	Summerfest Shootout	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness	dhhal@aol.com
July 24-31	MRF RB Clinic	Washington	DC	Banneker Park	steven.c.harper392@gmail.com
July 27-31	Elite Racquetball Camp	Centennial	CO	Life Time	dennis@drdracquetball.com
Aug 5	Dog Days of Summer	Reston	VA	Stratton Woods Park	billracquetball@gmail.com
Aug 3-6	WRT Life Time Denver Open	Centennial	CO	Life Time	torneld@charter.net
Aug 4-6	State Games of America	Grand Rapids	MI	Riverview Athletic Club	thoward@prokennexusa.com
Aug 4-6	Soda Man August Shootout	Las Vegas	NV	Stratosphere Hotel and Casino	rjlam@hotmail.com
Aug 4-6	WorWindyCity3WallBrawl	Chicago	IL	Rainbow Beach	joeyjfl7@aol.com
Aug 12	Rally In The Region	Schererville	IN	Omni Health & Fitness	ryan.consulting@gmail.com
Aug 12-13	August Triple Crown	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club	leo@themav.com
Aug 19	Kansas State Doubles	Overland Park	KS	The Athletic Club At Overland Park	mwedel@mokancomm.net
Aug 18-20	Summer Scorch RB Tournament	Reseda	CA	USA Fitness MegaCenter	rjlam@hotmail.com
Aug 26	Summer Jam Shootout	Harahan	LA	Ochsner Fitness Center, Harahan	racpres99@aol.com
Aug 25-27	Florida State Double	Davie	FL	David Posnack Jewish Comm Cen.	auchad99@hotmail.com
Aug 26-27	Sierra Slugfast Shootout	Auburn	CA	Auburn Racquet & Fitness Club	ellistyle@comcast.net

# CALENDAR of EVENTS



Date	Event	City	State	Location	Email
Aug 29 - Sept 2	IRF World Senior Racquetball Championships	Albuquerque	NM	Midtown Sports And Wellness	gmampro@gmail.com
Sept 8-10	Fran Davis Racquetball Camp	Claremont	CA	Claremont Club	camps@frandavisracquetball.com
Sept 9-10	September Triple Crown	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club	leo@themav.com
Sept 14-17	Grace Warrior Ministries WRT	Atlanta	GA	Recreation ATL	info@recreationatl.com
Sept 15-17	NC Fall Classic Racquetball Championships	Charlotte	NC	Dowd YMCA	ericnew@hotmail.com
Sept 21-24	3Wallball World Championships	Las Vegas	NV	Stratosphere Hotel & Casino	vicheatfan@yahoo.com
Sept 22-24	Team Ocala	Ocala.	FL	Ocala YMCA - Frank DeLuca	teamocala@gmail.com

## USA Racquetball Hall of Fame

Nominations for the USA Racquetball Hall of Fame are to be submitted by September 15th.

Please see our website for criteria and nomination process:

<http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/Programs/Hall-of-Fame/Nominations>



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## UPDATES FROM THE 40+ NMRA CROWD

By Cindy Tilbury, NMRA President

### First Timers Are Everywhere!

A few years back, the NMRA surveyed its active player members to see if they wanted to have one or more of our three NMRA tournaments in the same place each year. Almost everyone voted to “move the tourneys around the country.” In order to find many new players who would not come to us, we needed to go to them. We think we are finding them, because for the last three years, we have consistently had over one-third of our players trying the NMRA for the first time. They come back when they can, but they have a great time and realize we are not just another local tourney with a banquet. We are quite proud of that accomplishment and want to remind anyone thinking of becoming a prized NMRA first-timer that we don’t require you to join the NMRA until you come back for your second tournament.

### Long-Timers Go Into the NMRA Hall of Fame

First-timers are great, but they need a little incentive to stick with us for years to come. We had that in December 2016 at our Atlanta Doubles-Only tournament. In his hometown area, the NMRA inducted Dan Jones into our Hall of Fame. Dan was voted in as a Player/Athlete, with many gold and silver medals to his credit. Several tables were reserved for the “Dan Jones Fan Club” as they came out to watch Jerry Prentiss introduce Dan’s legacy and show pictures of young Dan and older Jerry-and-Dan doubles wins. That was special to the leadership of the NMRA, as we don’t always get to see so many supportive friends at ceremonies like that.

Next, in Arlington, Texas, Carmen Alatorre-Martin accepted her NMRA Hall of Fame plaque and a hug after a sweet introductory slideshow from her doubles partner, Patrick Gibson, of Fort Worth. Carmen’s husband, Curtis, is a regular NMRA coach of the DC-area military group that Carmen heads, so he had been to many similar banquets. Carmen and Curtis’s daughter, Kristen, is an Open level player, but she remarked how she had not seen anything quite like our NMRA get-togethers. Their son, Q, doesn’t love the sport quite like the rest of the family, but he also had a great time in the audience laughing with the family. One fun fact we learned: while dating, Carmen wanted to try racquetball as an activity they could do together. Curtis made Carmen show him 100 good lob serves to each side of the court before he would actually play. Carmen eventually loved it so much she dropped softball and other activities and hasn’t looked back.

### Upcoming NMRA Events

Think about joining us at one of the NMRA’s upcoming events, and we will make sure you have a great time.

- July 12-15, 2017 -- West Allis (Milwaukee) Wisconsin, 40+ (deadline June 28, 2017). Summer in the Milwaukee and Chicago areas is filled with music, food, beer, fishing, boating, and a lot of racquetball.
- December 1-3, 2017 (Doubles Only) -- Northern California, site TBA, 40+ (online registration soon). For this event, we are trying something a little different: Friday, Saturday and Sunday play. We know 40+ people have jobs and kids, so for this one event, we are seeing if we get some players who don’t have enough vacation time.
- March 28-31, 2018 -- Warren, New Jersey, 40+ (online registration soon). We are excited to bring our event to the Northeast U.S. With help from Jonathan Clay, we will be part of their Rollout series of events in the region.

### Special Congratulations

A few of our favorite NMRA players recently got married, and as you all know, it is not easy finding a life partner who will put up with a serious racquetball habit. Janice Vosika and Erik Foote tied the knot in Wyoming during MLK weekend 2017. Long-time Minnesota mixed doubles partners Susan Schatz and David Nelson got married in November 2016. We couldn’t be happier for Janice and Eric, Susan and David!

Newlyweds Susan Schatz and David Nelson  
Photo By Cindy Tilbury





## Skills for Teaching Racquetball

In the USAR-IP curriculum, there is an entire chapter devoted to teaching. Here are some reminders:

1. Listen carefully. Often a less experienced instructor overlooks something important the student says. Recent injuries, layoffs for conditioning, stress at work, and other such things are important to consider during a lesson.
2. Have the student demonstrate skills, rather than you assuming you know what is wrong with their skill set. Often, all you may have to do is tweak a forehand rather than break it all down.
3. Don't talk too much. It's gratifying to talk about how much you know, but the student wants to learn. "What's in it for me?" is the question on every student's mind.
4. Do get the student moving. They don't understand? Okay, but let them get moving and explain it as you go.
5. Safety is of utmost importance. Make sure the door is closed, eye guards are on, racquetballs are off the floor, and you have a safe environment in which to teach.
6. Be creative -- often you have to think outside the box. Physical limitations, court issues (like no/limited courts available) lend themselves to coming up with solutions in 30 seconds or less.
7. Have fun! Your students' passion for the game should fuel you on low energy, lack-of-sleep days.
8. Put your own game on the back burner. This is hard to do for many good players. Remember, this is not about you; it is about your student!
9. Market yourself! If your student liked the lesson, ask them to bring a friend next time. Word of mouth is the best advertisement.
10. Be knowledgeable and versed in all main areas of the game.
11. Be clear, and do not keep repeating yourself due to lack of knowledge.
12. Stay positive - build your student up.
13. Come prepared with a lesson plan.

### USAR-IP Sample Lesson Plan - 1 Hour

**Introduction of the Topic - 5 minutes**

**Student Assessment - 20 minutes**

**Student's Execution - 2 minutes**

**Instruction's Demonstration - 5 minutes**

**Error Detection - 5 minutes**

**Corrections - 8 minutes**

**Drills/Play (Based on Lesson) - 20 minutes**

**Homework - 3 minutes**

**Summary / Review - 5 minutes**

**Appointment - 2 minutes**

**Please check out the new USAR-IP course on STRETCHING.**

**Look under Tests and Courses in your USAR-IP profile.**

**Also covers the major racquetball injuries, treatment, and prevention.**

## ASHAWAY RACKET STRINGS PRESENTS: Tuning Up For Outdoor Racquetball

Outdoor racquetball continues to grow in popularity and competitiveness with new tournaments springing up all over the country. But given the differences from its indoor sibling -- no back walls or ceilings, short or non-existent side walls, differing court sizes and playing surfaces -- we wondered about the player side of the equation: about why people like Outdoor so much, and about how to prepare for the Outdoor season in terms of conditioning routines, breaking indoor habits, risks of the game, and (of course) about stringing.

We put these questions to our old friends Jacqueline Paraiso-Larsson and Cliff Swain, both avid outdoor players in addition to being racquetball legends. Here are some of their comments and suggestions:

### On why Outdoor Racquetball is becoming so popular:

**Cliff:** Outdoor is growing for a lot of reasons. The atmosphere is different for a lot of people. Player spouses and friends don't mind coming as much, even though they might not play, because they're sitting outside, getting some sun. They can have a drink, take a walk. Indoors at a health club, you're under their rules, and you're under a roof.

What also helps is that a lot of these courts are complimentary. They're at parks. So people can come with two racquets and a ball and play. Lots of people will do that forever, and then there are others who may graduate and go inside and maybe even try to become a pro player!

**Jacqueline:** I think it is because Outdoor is like going to the park or to the beach. So if your family likes to be outdoors, then it's great. You can hang out with other families, and the kids don't feel confined. You can also network on Facebook for babysitting! Indoors, there are only a few people who can watch any particular court. Outdoors, you can watch three or four courts at once. That's also good for watching kids! So it's easier for families. The atmosphere outdoors is a little more relaxed, too. There's noise everywhere, so kids yelling and running around is not a problem.

### On training and conditioning:

**Cliff:** As far as training goes, the off-court training is nearly the same for outdoor as indoor: the conditioning, the footwork. You should be in the best shape you can be and your footwork should be as great as it can be both indoors and out.

But when I practice for Outdoor, my focus is on hitting the ball straight, especially for one-wall tournaments. Indoors, wide balls and angles and pinches are what we practice and what we instinctively hit in certain situations. Outdoors, they are bad shots -- people who hit it out are usually the people who lose. Outdoors, a good defensive ball or reactionary ball is one that is 2, 3, 4 or even 6, 7 feet high straight up the middle. So the trick is to get yourself to the point where you instinctively do that, rather than going for a wide angle or a pinch.

**Jacqueline:** I think it's important to train moving laterally. I use a bungee cord that I attach to my car in my driveway, and run laterally with it giving me resistance. I shuffle sideways and swing away with my racquet. The neighbors probably think I'm crazy, but it really helps a lot.

If you're limited to an indoor court, work on hitting from deep in the backcourt. If you're playing outdoors you can go to the left and play outside the court and always play your forehand. Indoors, you can't do that. So practice simulating things you're going to do outdoors inside the court. It's limited, but it's possible: hitting from the backcourt, hitting overhead shots and returning those are good. I like to practice a lot of down-the-line shots. If it hits the side wall indoors, then I know that's going to go over the line outdoors. So I try to keep it bouncing on the floor, not the wall.

### On stringing:

**Jacqueline:** Control is key to the outdoor game. You have limited side walls and no back walls, so you've got to control the game better and keep the ball in the court. If you hit an angled pass shot, you'd better keep it nice and controlled because if you widen that angle just a little

bit and it bounces outside that line, then you lose that rally. With Ashaway's red PowerKill® 17, I can hit that ball a lot harder and control it at the same time. I string racquets as well, and I usually string the crosses a bit tighter to improve control.

**Cliff:** I also use PowerKill 17 both indoors and out, and I tend to string a little bit tighter outdoors. When it gets super hot out, the string seems to be a little more bouncy and I like it to feel the same as I'm used to. So indoors I string at 34 lbs. and now outdoors I string at 36 or 37.



Official String



Photo By Rick Bernstein



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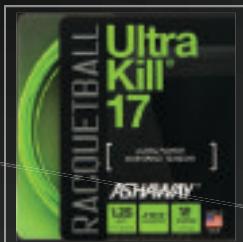
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## UltraKill® 17

- ▶ SUPERIOR COMBINATION OF POWER AND CONTROL
- ▶ ENHANCED FEEL AND CONTROL OF THE BALL



## UltraKill® 18

- ▶ MAXIMUM SPIN AND FEEL OF THE BALL
- ▶ OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE IN 18 GAUGE



OFFICIAL STRINGS OF  
USA RACQUETBALL

ASHAWAY®

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# To Us, The Ball Matters™



*"I love the Pro Penn Green ball. The fast crisp action off my racquet helped me win GOLD Medals at the 2011 Pan American Games and 2012 World Championships. No other brand compares to Penn!"*

**Paola Longoria**

*"All the Pro's on the IRT know that the Pro Penn HD ball is second to none. With today's lightweight racquets this is the only ball to play with. Its lightweight design and softer feel offers players of all levels the most comfortable experience on the court, even with shots exploding over 180 mph!"*

**Rocky Carson**