

Racquetball Reporter

quarterly publication of the Racquetball Association of Michigan

February 2012

In This Issue

Page 2

View of the
President

Page 4

RAM State Singles
Championships

Page 7

State Singles Entry
Form

Page 8

Award Nominations
Form



Team Michigan takes Tempe by Storm!

Melody Gorno

9 Michigan residents infiltrated the 45th USAR National Doubles Championships held on the beautiful campus of Arizona State University at their very modern student recreation center in Tempe, AZ on February 8 – 12, 2012. We all walked into the club on Wednesday hoping to gain the ultimate goal – the gold medal.

There were a total of 352 participants in over 50 divisions. The Michigan influence was shown with the additional Centurion divisions offered this year. Last year, after Dan Greene and I were able to get the division added to the tournament, the Centurion division debuted at the National Doubles event. This year we were also able to get a few more of the Centurion divisions offered and the Centurion division proved to be one of the most popular division in the tournament. 98 of the tournament entrants were entered in a Centurion Division.

If you love to play doubles, like I do, this is a great racquetball vacation. The majority of us rented a beautiful home in Phoenix and had our resident chef Keith Vogel making omelets and fritatas for us every morning. This was the first time I have ever heard of someone making a 5 egg omelet, as well as some-

one being able to eat a 5 egg omelet. (Not mentioning any names – Nick and Darrel). It was also nice to go back to the house between matches and relax in the hot tub or just go back to the house to see what Keith was cooking for dinner. Tanya has family in the area so she was able to mix a bit of racquetball in with visiting family. Brad Schopieray ended up staying at one of the host hotels near the club. Keith, Dan and I had our spouses/"significant others" join us on Saturday to watch the semis and finals and then we stayed an additional week after the tournament to soak up some sun, enjoy each other's company, and have some rest and relaxation before heading back to Michigan. We have already got our sights on a rental for next year and are excited to find out the tournament will return to Tempe, AZ Feb 6 – 10, 2013. If anyone is interested in joining us, feel free to email me at melody.gorno@gmail.com.

The Michigan Participants were: Darrel Bartkowiak, Nick Frontczak, Melody Gorno, Dan Greene, Gloria Joseph, Tia Lecland, Tanya Nofs, Brad Schopieray, and Keith Vogel.

(cont. pg.3)



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Newsletter

The Racquetball Reporter
5753 S. Corey Rd.
Perry, MI 48872

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VIEW OF THE PRESIDENT

Twayne M. Howard

We are in the home stretch. The prime of the indoor is coming to a close. But... it's not over yet and the best is yet to come. We've had a great season so far, so let's take a brief look back.

We've seen the return of Big Time Pro Racquetball to Michigan with the Red Swain Shootout in Davison last October. This was the first full ranking Tier 1 Pro Stop in Michigan in twenty years and the Pros did not let us down. What a great show. I want to send a personal thank you to Don Schopieray, Tom Blakeslee and Cliff Swain who made it happen. What an amazing weekend. I'm not sure I've recovered yet. All I know is plans are underway for 2012. Better check your calendar and make sure you don't miss it this time.

We also had a Tier 4 IRT Pro stop as the West Michigan Open brought the Pros back to benefit Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. The final featured a five game classic with Cliff Swain defeating Brad Schopieray to take the Championship. The big winners were the kids at the hospital as we raised over \$1,000 to go to this worthy charity.

This brings me to the ever-popular topic of sponsors. Every event on the schedule is looking for financial support. Financial support of any size. Why? More sponsorship money allows the tournaments to give more money to charity, buy better awards or offer more prize money that brings in better players to watch. More sponsorship money means that the tournament might put on a better party, buy better gifts, better awards, better food or generally put on a better show for you and others to enjoy.

Sound good? Well, it's easy to step in and help out. Check out the list of tournaments, pick one and contact the director. Ask what they need, what they'd

use it for and what they'd give you in return. It can be a match made in heaven and it can truly be a win-win-win (win-win... How many players will benefit from this? Cool!) So pick a tournament and give back to the sport we all love. It doesn't have to be a lot. You'd be surprised at how far a tournament director can stretch an extra \$50 of \$100. Just sayin...

Okay, back to your regularly scheduled "View". As I write this, the members of Team CARA are running their second event of the year and this one is HUGE! This is the biggest local tournament in three years. I want to send out hearty congratulations for the great job they do. Players obviously recognize that, and having 110 players at the East Lansing MAC is the reward for all that great work. It's not the first event to show a big uptick this season. My guess is that means we will have a HUGE State Singles Championship.

And since we are on THAT topic, let's talk about the 2012 RAM State Singles Racquetball Championships. The climax of the main indoor season is returning to Davison Athletic Club, March 24-25. This is a qualifier to play in the USA Racquetball National Championships. The tournament has a number of perks this year. Yes, we'll have the usual full house, all the great play, the Hall of Fame and Awards Banquet, the medals, the food, the atmosphere, the competition... all the usual amazing reasons to play and vie for the title State Champion. But wait... there's more. "What? What more could there be?" Well, I'm going to tell you... in an article later on in this Newsletter. (Oh, that was cruel!)

(cont. pg. 4)

Team Michigan takes Tempe by Storm!

(cont. from pg. 1)

Michigan ended up taking 7 gold medals, 2 silver medals, and 9 bronze medals. Here is the breakdown on the medalists:

Gold Medalist:

Dan Greene/Keith Vogel – Men's 60+C

Darrel Bartkowiak/Keith Vogel – Men's Centurion B

Nick Frontczak/Tanya Nofs – Mixed B

Melody Gorno/Thao Le – Women's A

Silver Medalist:

Dan Greene/Tia Lecland – Mixed C

Bronze Medalist

Dan Greene/Nick Frontczak – Men's Centurion B

Keith Vogel/Gloria Joseph – Mixed Centurion B

Melody Gorno/Gloria Joseph – Women's 40/50A

Tia Lecland/Tanya Nofs – Women's A/B

Brad Schopieray/John Scott – Men's Open

Many of the participants were in round robin divisions which provided a lot of matches and court time. Some of the participants also competed against other Michigan players, thus adding a bit more to the sweet feel of victory. My partner and I competed against Tia Lecland and Tanya Nofs in the Women's A Division, winning 15-1; 15-12. Nick Frontczak and Tanya Nofs competed against Dan Greene and Tia Lecland in the Mixed B/C Division; winning 15-8; 15-14. Keith Vogel and Darrel Bartkowiak competed against Dan Greene and Nick Frontczak in the Centurion B division, winning in a tiebreaker (13), 8,6.

While competing in a national event,

you hope to be at your ultimate conditioning - both mentally and physically. The matches are very competitive and very fulfilling when winning during an intense match against worthy opponents. During the tournament, allegedly because of a trip to Jack-In-the-Box, Nick Frontczak suffered from food poisoning. Even though he was feeling terrible, he was not able to eat anything, and he wasn't able to keep anything down if he did try to eat something; he competed at a national level and really proved to all of us that he is a warrior and able to overcome adversity to focus on winning the gold! Way to go Nick! It was also fun to see Brad Schopieray competing against players like Rocky Carson and Ben Croft. He had a permanent smile on his face and it was truly incredible to see such enthusiasm and pride to be on the court. Brad was a great representative for Michigan on the court and I am proud to see the progress he has made as he has established his presence within the professional ranks in racquetball.

Many players try to get their flights coordinated with their matches on Sunday; it can be hard to figure when to schedule the flight home. Darrel Bartkowiak realized he was cutting it close with his match time and his flight departure time. He and Keith Vogel were in their finals match on Sunday and had lost the first game 15-6. The score was 14-14 in the second game, with a tiebreaker match a possibility. Keith hit the winning shot at 14/14 to force the tie breaker. Walking out of the court to the cheers of the Michigan contingent, Nick joked to Darrel "Great shot - way to go, now we are going to miss our flight". Nick then went to take a shower during Darrel and Keith's finals tiebreaker game so he would look nice on the plane! Darrel and Keith were victorious in their match, making the mad dash to the airport worth the effort. (Yes, he did make his flight. We're not sure if he was able to

get a shower or not but he did have his gold medal with him).

National Doubles is such a great event to build friendships, great competition and a great vacation spot. As Gloria Joseph stated: "It was great to see the great level and variety of play/styles, and also gratifying to see ALL skill levels and age groups. Watching the pros was a wonderful experience, especially as I've not seen Pro Doubles before; how they all move so gracefully with so little space, and with such control. Overall, just a great time for racquetball lovers....and the Michigan contingent did the state proud with all the winners!"

If you are interested in joining us next year, let us know. We would love to have additional participants.



Tanya Nofs, Thao Le, Tia Lecland, Melody Gorno. Not pictured –Gloria Joseph



Darrel Bartkowiak, Keith Vogel, Nick Frontczak, Dan Greene

VIEW OF THE PRESIDENT

(cont. from pg. 2)

Now, it wouldn't be right to let you think the season ends in March. Why, that would be just plain irresponsible. First off, the best players in the Upper Midwest and beyond will be coming to the Davison Athletic Club the weekend of April 14-15 for the USA Racquetball Regional Pro/Am Championships. Not only is Michigan hosting its first Regional Championship in decades, but it is going to be another Tier 4 Pro/Am. Talk about the best of both worlds. If you can't play States, this will be another opportunity to qualify for the USA Racquetball National Championships.

June brings two marquee events. First the Michigan Senior Olympics is once again a fully sanctioned event. June 11 is the day, Oakland University is the place. If you are over the age of 50, this is a great one day event. Chuck Van Hoose puts on a great show that you don't want to miss.

A couple weeks later on June 28 is the Third Annual Meijer State Games of Michigan. This year Racquetball will be one of 31 sports drawing over 5,000 competitors to compete in this Olympic style event. This will be a one day competition with Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in EVERY division and a full Olympic-styled medal ceremony with podium and fanfare for all. The MAC in Grand Rapids is proud to once again host this great event that allows Racquetball to take its place with the other great sports participating.

And that's not all. July 29, the Downtown YMCA in Grand Rapids will host the Transplant Games of America. This is a special event is only open to anyone who has received a solid organ transplant or bone marrow donation. More than just an athletic event, the Transplant Games of America highlights the critical importance of organ and tissue donation, while celebrating the lives of organ donors and recipients. The requirements are very strict and the deadline for entry is May 31 so please contact the West Michigan Sports Commission immediately if you think you qualify and you want to play.

And that's just the indoor schedule. There will be a full schedule of WOR events in various venues throughout the Summer. That schedule is still being finalized so make sure you check out the WOR web site for more info.

I'm not sure what else I can say. We've had a fantastic season so far, and it is only going to get better. So get your practice time in, cross train, work on that special serve and get ready. The tournaments get bigger and the competition tougher. Got enough game? Only one way to find out! I'll see you there!



ADVERTISING RATES FOR THE RACQUETBALL REPORTER FOR 2012-2013

The Racquetball Reporter is published three times throughout the year - July, November, and February.. Items to be included in the Racquetball Reporter for the **2012-13** year must be submitted by the following dates:

July 15, 2012 January 12, 2013
October 6, 2012

Advertisement material is subject to approval by the RAM Board of Directors. The prices for advertisement material are:

\$400 - Full page ad to run in all three issues (7" w x 9.5" h)
\$250 - Half page ad to run in all three issues (7" w x 4.75" h)

\$150 - Quarter page ad to run in all three issues (3.5" w x 4.75" h)
\$100 - Club listing for all three issues (3" w x 2" h)

All advertisements must be submitted in camera ready format in the appropriate size. E-mailed graphics can be accepted in either a **.TIFF** or **.JPG** format. All advertisements will be in black and white for all issues, except the fall issue which will be in full color. Payment must accompany submission of all advertisement material. Information may be mailed to The Racquetball Reporter, 5753 S. Corey Rd., Perry, MI 48872 or sent electronically to hippies23@gmail.com.

RAM STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Twayne M. Howard

“RAM STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS”. Catches your attention doesn’t it? It’s the biggest tournament of the year, and it’s the one we all work so hard for. It’s almost here. A few more days. A few more practice matches. A few more ceiling ball drills. A few more miles on the treadmill. Will a few more be enough? Only one way to find out. Get your entry form in now, or sign up online at <http://www.r2sports.com/tourney.asp?TID=8903>.

The tournament is almost here. And a State Championship is incentive enough to play, but in case you need more, we’ve got a couple items to highlight.

The RAM Board’s mission is to better the sport of Racquetball in the State of Michigan and one way to do that is to deliver the best experience possible to players at the State Championship tournaments. This year, the Board has decided to give a more expensive gift to all participants in the State Singles Championship. Instead of shirts, hoodies or sweatpants, every participant will receive jacket from OneShot valued at \$45. That’s what you will pay to play in one division. Wait until you see these up close. They are too cool.



But the jackets aren’t the only thing. At State Doubles last December, RAM introduced a new Medal for its State Championships. These medals are a thing of beauty and it makes all the hard work even more worth it when you get one hung around your neck. Ask any of the Champions from State Doubles. Thanks to Hall of Famer Mike Anderson in his assistance designing the medals and making them affordable for us.

As for the details, the RAM State Singles Championship is returning to the Davison Athletic Club March 24-25 where Randy Minto and Don Schopieray are getting the red carpets ready. Expect the same

amazing hospitality as always and all the great service the Board of Directors can offer.

A State Singles tradition - Saturday night is made for celebration. The Davison Country Club will play host to the RAM Hall of Fame Induction and Annual Awards Banquet. At the banquet we always celebrate the achievements of the current tournament season. We will award the Female, Male and Junior Players of the Year, Tournament Director of the Year, Best Club, Sportsperson of the Year and the Most Improved Player. Anyone can submit a nomination. Either send it in with your entry into State Singles, or send an e-mail to howardt@rightplace.org. We have already begun to take your nominations for these awards. The nominations are then considered by a committee of the Board for final determinations. Who do you think is the best of the best for 2010-2011? Shoot an e-mail to howardt@rightplace.org and your voice will be heard!

The highlight of the evening is the induction of the 2012 RAM Hall of Fame Class. The inductees will be announced later, but it is always an evening to remember. Reserve your ticket now as they will not be available the weekend of the tournament. We have to confirm our numbers well in advance.

It’s set to be an incredible weekend and a fitting end to what has been a spectacular indoor season. Awesome jackets, redesigned medals, Hall of Famers, Annual Awards, and the chance to become a State Champion. I can hardly wait. See you there.



JOIN THE RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

Membership Includes:

- *Membership card, USA Racquetball Official Rule Book, travel and equipment discounts
- *USA Racquetball medical, life, and liability insurance at sanctioned events
- *Three issues of the RAM newsletter, THE RACQUETBALL REPORTER
- *Four issues of the USA Racquetball national magazine, RACQUETBALL MAGAZINE
- *RAM sanctioned tournament entry forms mailed to your home
- *Eligibility to play in all sanctioned tournaments and receive national ranking points (except Limited event)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DATE OF BIRTH ____ / ____ / ____ HOME PHONE _____

WORK PHONE _____

_____ \$50.00 – Adult Competitor

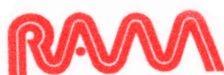
_____ \$25.00 – Junior Competitor (21 and under)

_____ \$20.00 - Limited Event

MAIL TO: RAM, 38114 Lakeshore, Harrison Twp, MI 48045

Racquetball Reporter

5753 S. Corey Rd.
Perry, MI 48872



1

RAM

RAM

RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
2012 RAM STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

March 23 - 25, 2012

DAVISON ATHLETIC CLUB
2140 Fairway Drive, Davison, MI
Phone (810) 653 - 1068

ENTRY FEES & DEADLINE

First Event	\$45 per person
Second Event	\$20 per person
Juniors	\$15 per person
USA Racquetball Membership	\$50 per person
Hall of Fame Banquet	\$35 per person
Telephone/Late Entries	\$5 per person

Entries must be received by March 19, 2012. You may sign up ONLINE at www.r2sports.com. Any entries received after March 19 will be subject to a \$5 LATE FEE. To be entered, we must receive your entry form, a phone call or email AND PAYMENT. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS. Please help us by signing up early to avoid the crush at the deadline.

RULES

Single elimination format with matches consisting of two games to fifteen and a tie-breaker to eleven. USA Racquetball rules apply including mandatory USA Racquetball-approved lensed eye guards. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to move or reclassify players if they are improperly placed or there is a need to combine divisions. Any participant must live or work full time in Michigan and be a member of RAM. Players must be able to provide proof if challenged.

STARTING TIMES

Play may begin on Friday, March 23, 2012 for draws of 16 or more. Every effort will be made to reduce Friday play. **Call the club on Thursday, March 22, 2012 after 12:00 pm** for starting times or check online at: <http://www.r2sports.com>.

AWARDS

Awards will be given for the first four places in divisions of 16 or more. Each participant will receive RAM Championship sweat pants, please provide your size. All juniors will receive a Team Michigan shirt and participation award. Ladies entering by March 8 will receive a special gift.

HALL OF FAME / ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

The Hall of Fame and Annual Awards Banquet is Saturday evening at the Davison Country Club to honor the new inductees into the Hall of Fame and the 2011-2012 RAM Merit Award winners. You must sign up for the banquet NO LATER than Monday, March 19. No banquet tickets will be sold at the tournament.

SPECIAL GIFT

All Tournament Entrants will receive a special OneShot Jacket. Make sure you specify your size. See newsletter for more details.

**PROPENN HD IS THE OFFICIAL BALL OF THE
RAM STATE SINGLE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

Tom Blakeslee (586) 295—9772 Twayne Howard (616) 540—7925 Dan Mullin Don Schopieray Jack White

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 19, 2011

Name _____ Club Affiliation _____ Jacket Size _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____
Phone (days) _____ (evenings) _____ Date of Birth _____
Email address: _____

Make checks payable to RAM, and mail to RAM State Singles Championships, 38114 Lakeshore, Harrison Twp., MI 48045.

Entry Fee (first event)	\$45 _____
2nd Event Fee	\$20 _____
Junior Fee	\$20 _____
USA Rac. Membership	\$50 _____
Hall of Fame Banquet	\$35 _____
Late/Phone Fee	\$ 5 _____
TOTAL	_____

Waiver clause: I hereby for myself, my heirs, executors & administrators release any & all claims for damages I may have against RAM, the host club, tournament staff, & their agents, for all injuries which may be suffered by me in conjunction with my participation in this tournament.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(parent/guardian signature if under 18)

DIVISIONS

Circle correct choices—limit 2 divisions

MENS		WOMENS		JUNIORS
Open	40 + Open	25 + A	40 + A	55 + A
Elite	45 + Open	25 + B	40 + B	55 + B
A	50 + Open	25 + C	40 + C	55 + C
B	55 + Open	25 + D	40 + D	55 + D
C	60 + Open	30 + A	45 + A	60 + A
D	65 + Open	30 + B	45 + B	60 + B
24-Open	70 + Open	30 + C	45 + C	60 + C
25+Open	75 + Open	30 + D	45 + D	60 + D
30+Open	24-A	35 + A	50 + A	65 + B
35+Open	24-B	35 + B	50 + B	18 & Under
	24-C	35 + C	50 + C	16 & Under
	24-D	35 + D	50 + D	14 & Under
				12 & Under
				10 & Under
				8 & Under

Alternate Division _____

Mail To: RAM STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP, 38114 Lakeshore, Harrison Twp., MI 48045

AWARD NOMINATIONS

Please nominate only one person per category.

You may choose to nominate for one or more categories.

Awards are based on accomplishments during the 2011-2012 seasons.

You may submit nominations with out playing in the tournament & you can email them to
howardt@rightplace.org

Female Player of the Year _____

Male Player of the Year _____

Junior Player of the Year _____

Most Improved Player _____

Sportsman of the Year _____

Tournament Director of the Year _____

Club/Owners of the Year _____

Other (specify contribution) _____

2012 RAM HALL OF FAME and ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Where: Davison Country Club

When: Saturday, March 24, 2012

Time: Cash Bar - 7:30 pm

Dinner - 8:00 pm

Cost: **\$35** - Available for purchase with your tournament entry form by March 19, 2012. Tickets will NOT be available at the tournament desk on Friday or Saturday. You do not need to play in the tournament to come to the banquet. (See RAM newsletter)

Banquet is a buffet.



A special night for racquetball in Michigan to honor the Hall of Fame inductees and RAM Merit Award winners.