

National Racquetball®

Vol. 6 No. 11
November, 1978
\$1.50

• DICK SMOTHERS' RB ROUTE TO BROADWAY

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RB

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National Racquetball®

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On The Cover . . .

Dick Smothers, who - with his brother, Tom - made TV screens sizzle in the '60s, wears more clothes on the racquetball court than he does in the current Broadway hit, *I Love My Wife*, where his basic stage wardrobe is underwear. For Nick Longhurst's story on how racquetball put Dick in shape for his Broadway exposure, see page 18.

-Photo by Dennis Rowe

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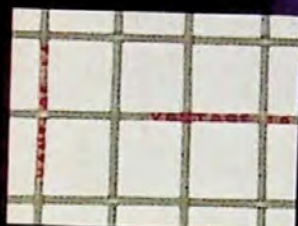
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The Other Side Of Kendler . . .

This is hard for me to write and it may not be the most appropriate subject for an editorial. Most publishers don't write about themselves. But something happened that I would like to share with you. It concerns a letter I received, and here it is . . .

"Dear Bob, On reading your speech to the players at the National Championships, it occurred to me that you are one of those few people who has changed the quality of life for many of us. Thank you! Signed, Peggy Gudbrandsen."

If you are still interested, here is my answer . . . *"Dear Peggy, You must know that your note is the sweetest, most loving expression anyone could ever receive. Surprising as it may seem I am a very sentimental, soft hearted person and that explains the lump in my throat and the dew in my eyes. You never did anything nicer for anyone, and I hope your husband realizes what a Beautiful Person you are. Like Evie!" Sincerely, Bob Kendler.*

The only conclusion you can come to is that one very perceptive woman found that a so called tycoon can also be both human and sensitive. Only very few people know it. Peggy Gudbrandsen is one of them. First because she is a woman and you never really fool them. And second because she is one of the very few who realizes my only reward comes from testimonials like hers.

Needless to say, I get a lot of mail, and I love it. I read every letter and I answer every letter. That doesn't leave me much time for my 11 companies, with hundreds of thousands of dollars in construction on our drawing boards. Or for my little sweetheart, who watches tennis while I answer letters. But it gives me a great deal of satisfaction to hear from our players and especially our girls. Peggy Steding learned that early. I simply fall apart when someone writes something kind to me. I am so used to battling and bellyaching that I am lost when someone extends a warm hand to me. Racquetball has given me many things, including some million dollar law suits. Our first 10 years have been more like a century than a decade. Nevertheless notes like Peggy Gudbrandsen's make it all worth while.

It is good for us to think no grace or blessing is truly ours till we are aware that God has blessed someone else with it through us. Each of us is bound to make the little circle in which we live better and happier. Bound to see that out of that small circle the widest good may flow. Each may have fixed in his mind the thought that out of a single household may flow influences that could stimulate the whole



commonwealth and the whole civilized world. I think that's what Peggy Gudbrandsen was trying to say in her kind note. And I hope I really have "changed the quality of life" for many, and that one day every one of you will understand that I have no other physical, financial or material purpose. It is one of the beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself. Throughout my building career I have worked to improve the quality of life in our community. Racquetball has given me the opportunity to improve the quality of life throughout the country. Could anyone be more fortunate?

Now for another point. Won't you please write to me whenever you have an idea, a complaint or maybe even a compliment? Not necessarily for me, but for that army of state and local volunteers who work the 500 tournaments we are involved in every year. Or our wonderful staff. We want to know what you think of what we do. ●

Evie & Bob Kendler

Evie and Bob Kendler

"I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever . . . nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it. And God doeth it that men should fear before Him."

Ecclesiastes 3, Chap. 3:14

NOT ALL RACQUETBALLS ARE CREATED EQUAL.



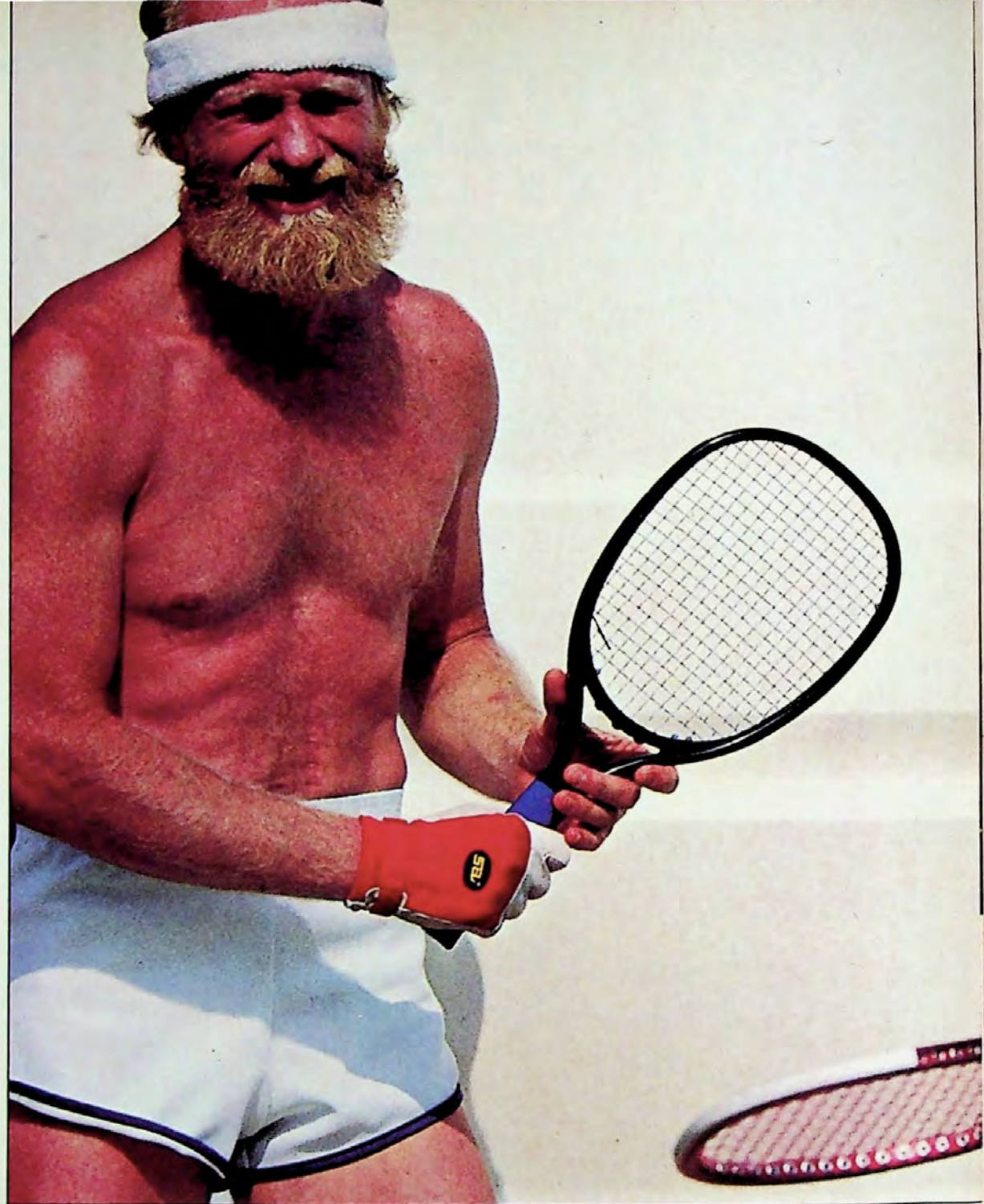
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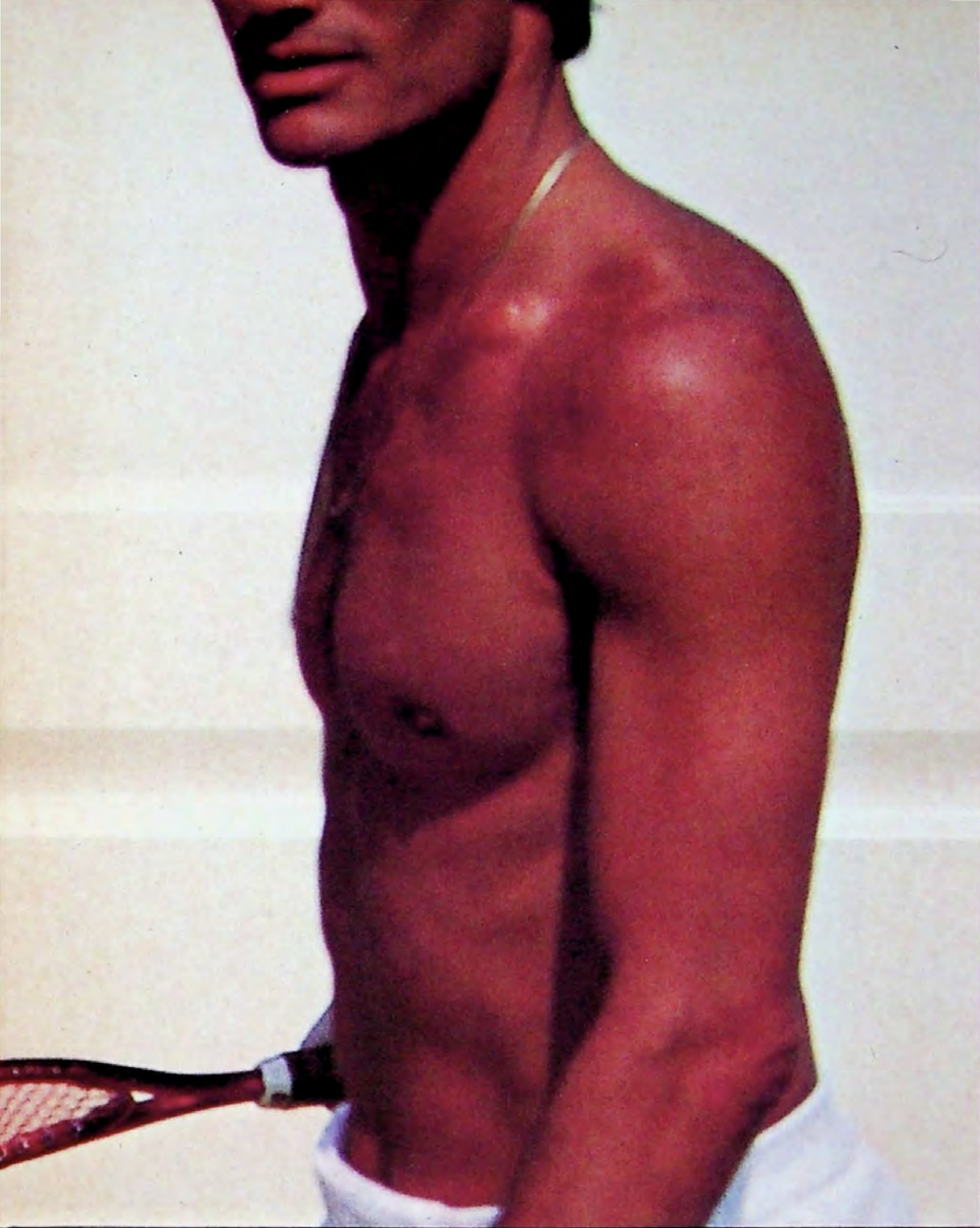


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Steven Kass (l.) and Ardito going over the contract under which USRA has endorsed the Strongwall System.

You don't often meet a man as fine as Steven Kass, vice president of the Strongwall Court System for racquetball courts. After personally meeting, negotiating and inspecting with Steve I can assure our membership and readership that the following is true.

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Second that the Strongwall System was chosen after careful inspection of facilities and based on the quality of the product.

Third that Strongwall will continue to build quality courts at reasonable prices to further promote racquetball throughout the world.

The Strongwall System is a complete wall and floor court system, using materials that have been proven for several decades in the most punishing industrial, institutional and marine applications. They offer uniformity, longevity and the ability to shrug off all kinds of abuse.

Through a unique triple layering process the Strongwall System can withstand any on-the-court punishment and, in fact, it is a virtually indestructible and seamless surface.

The flooring system used, which carries the trademark "Mapelite," is trowel-applied directly onto concrete slabs. The term Mapelite is used because the playing performance of



Kass and Ardito check out the application of Strongwall.



Watching the play on the Strongwall courts at Yogi Berra's Hall of Fame Racquetball Club in Fairfield, NJ.



this floor system so closely resembles that of the fine maple court flooring surfaces.

The result is an extremely dense and homogeneous surface, providing ideal characteristics of rebound, spin control and uniform impact sound. The floor is skid-free, seamless and waterproof.

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The Strongwall System has been tested for playability by some of the nation's top pros, both racquetball and handball, and all have expressed complete satisfaction with the system.

Strongwall Court Systems — welcome to the family! ●



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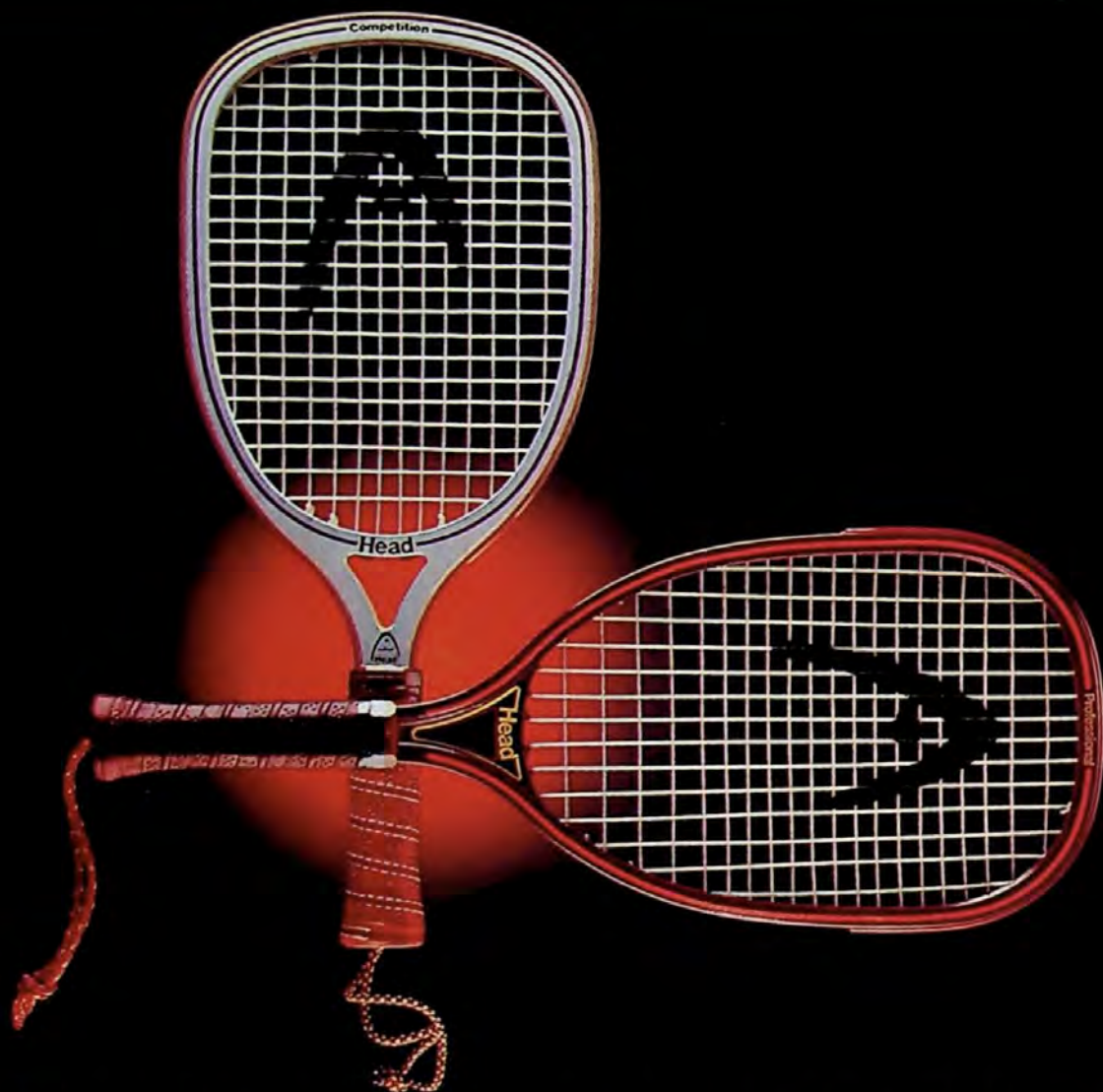
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Instead of diving for 'em.



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Racquetball Trims

by Nick Longhurst

When comedian Dick Smothers got a new job starring in a play on Broadway, he was delighted. That is delighted until he looked in a mirror.

For Dick, along with brother Tom, being star in the play *"I Love My Wife"* and the screenplay has one drawback. Dick has to spend about a quarter of his time onstage . . . in his underwear.

And that was going to be embarrassing because the normally svelte Smothers was tipping the scales at 180 pounds.

"That was a lot to pack into my 5 foot 9 inch frame. In short I was a blimp," he explained after a strenuous workout in the racquetball club in his home town of Santa Cruz, CA.

In June, when contracts for the play were first signed, Dick decided to get into racquetball on the advice of a friend, Club manager Bill Rose.

Along with the racquetball went three to four hours of dance rehearsal three times a week. Now when he comes off the court at the Cabrillo Court House in Santa Cruz he is a slim trim 164 pounds.

"I sweated off most of that weight in just one month playing racquetball," he added.

Dick first found out about the game in April during a trip to Utah. *"I played at the Fountain of Youth Health Club in Salt Lake City for the first time."*

And his early performances were less than stunning. "I never sweated so much and I never felt more inadequate than I did when I played. I'm well coordinated, but women were beating me hollow. I was lucky to get a couple of points a game."

Promising careers in athletics and football in high school ended when he and Tom joined forces as the Smothers Brothers.

"I went to college and sort of majored in singing," he chuckled.

Dick Smothers Down to Broadway Size



Once It Was Race Cars

Since then his sporting enjoyment has been limited to occasional jaunts around the celebrity tennis circuit and some quicker tours around some of America's motor racing circuits.

Until he retired from the sport five years ago Dick was an able racer with his own car, often competing in long distance endurance events. He still drives now, but only "when someone invites me to drive their car."

"Tennis always posed a problem for me because I'm long sighted. Professionals always told me that in tennis there are two things which go, the legs or the eyes. And in my case it was my eyes.

"The celebrity tennis circuit was interesting though. We would drink and party all night, then go out and try to kill each other."

Dick remembers one particular tournament, sponsored by Clint Eastwood and held at Pebble Beach, CA.

"I knew how the game was going when my doubles partner served the ball right into my ear."

But now tennis is over for Smothers. . . . And in July he entered his first club racquetball tournament in the novice bracket.

"I don't mind losing, but I love to compete," he explained.

"I'm building up a pretty good arsenal of serves and my back wall game is sound. You learn a lot playing three or four times a week like I do."

Dick isn't playing tennis any more. "I wasn't getting any enjoyment out of it because I wasn't focusing on the ball quickly enough. And I'm too good to get any enjoyment out of playing the game badly."



The racquetball playing Smothers Brother left Hollywood for quiet pursuits like running his Vine Hill vineyards.

He'll Be a Killer

"But I am developing a nice racquetball game," he said, "and I'm going to be a killer."

The thing he is most proud of is the weight loss bonus of playing. He coupled his on court activities with a low carbohydrate, all protein diet and shed 16 pounds in the first month.

"I can actually feel that racquetball is beneficial to me. I always feel good after I have played a hard game."

But it will still be some time before the Smothers Brothers form a doubles team. "Tom played once", explained Dick with a laugh. "After five minutes he looked like a drowned rat. He hit the ball a few times and couldn't stand up. Yep Smothers is in terrible shape."

Dick quit the Hollywood lifestyle a few years back and now lives in the hills close to Santa Cruz in northern California. It's a wine making area and that is exactly what he does in his spare time.

In fact his first commercial products from Smothers Vine Hill vineyards will soon be on sale in California.

"It has taken a long time to get the wine into shape for the market, a lot, lot longer than it took me to get back into shape for Broadway."

Dick will be playing racquetball in New York during the run of the play.

So next time you are in a club on either coast looking for a game and you see a left handed winemaker with a familiar face, watch out . . .

he's out to kill. ●



Dick Smothers and his friend, Linda Catania, pile a low calorie lunch on their plates after a racquetball game."

Football Wives Discover Racquetball

by Ellsworth Boyd

Ginny Dutton leaves home for her daily racquetball game . . .



Ginny Dutton (bottom), Danni Jones (center) and Lee Laird line up for a photo game of cutthroat.

When Ginny Dutton and Danni Jones compete in racquetball, they generate an excitement that makes observers want to grab a racquet and join them.

The wives of Baltimore Colts' Quarterback Bert Jones and Defensive Lineman John Dutton play at the Towson Court Club in Baltimore. Though the football wives are carefree and witty off the court, on court it's all business. The competition is fierce and nobody dogs it.

"We take our game seriously," Ginny says. "There's no clowning around or half hearted efforts. We go all out. . . it's a real contest."

"Yes, and the loser buys the slurpie," Danni adds. "We're health nuts and we hang out at the local health bar after the game."

In a match played for the benefit of National Racquetball the gridiron heroes' better halves displayed a friendly rivalry. There were combinations of kills and passes — backhand and forehand, anything you'd want to see in shot making.

Danni's power was offset by Ginny's quickness. In the beginning the quarterback's wife did more passing than shooting, driving the ball cross court or to the ceiling. She was devastating on one play, hitting a forehand left corner kill from center court. Her sharp eye contact with the ball added power and coordination to her swing.

But the all-pro defensive lineman's wife, like her husband, used experience and finesse against her opponent. Ginny hit a drive serve to the left, catching the crack at the left wall, just below the short line, for a service ace. Then she smacked a backhand, back wall kill. Never stationary she moved fluidly, always positioning and setting up for her next shot. The score was tied three times before Ginny gained momentum at 19-18 and ended it with two keen forehand kills.



For the second encounter they were joined by Leandra Laird, who's married to Colts' Strong Safety Bruce Laird. Lee was still learning the game, but she held her own in a threesome of cutthroat (first player to reach 21 wins).



- Ellsworth Boyd photos

... where her backhand often wins her points.

Lee gets plenty of encouragement from Ginny, whose husband, John, is a partner in Sports Courts, a racquetball club in Lincoln, NE.

"John and I have proof of racquetball's popularity," Ginny says. "The club started with eight courts that paid for themselves in four months. It grew to 600 members and needed four additional courts. Now Sports Courts has 1,400 members. John and I play every day in the off season."

Does she ever beat him?

"Are you kidding? He stands in the middle, switches his racquet from one hand to the other, and covers the whole court!"

"But I almost beat him when the season ended last year. I'd been playing daily and he hadn't touched a racquet in over four months. He won, but not after lots of swearing and sweating."

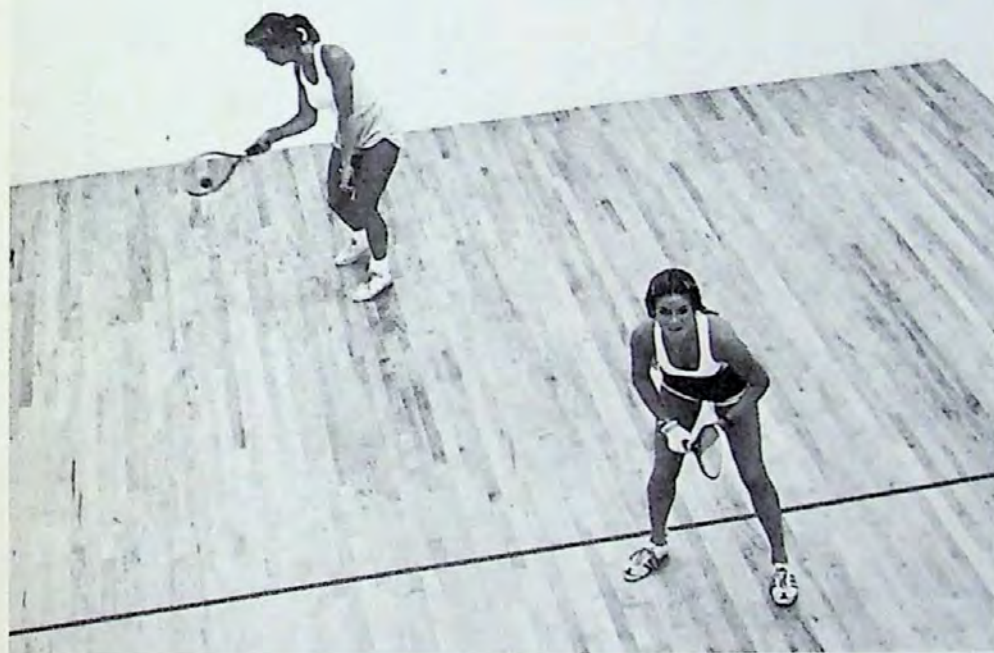
"We usually play after John finishes his weight lifting workout. Racquetball serves as a second workout for him; after four or five games we're both ringing wet. It's great for both of us for weight control and muscle tone."

Ginny taught Danni in Seattle, January, 1977, while both husbands were practicing for the Pro Bowl.

"We stayed at the Mission Valley Inn," Danni says, "where they have a club available to hotel guests. After playing every day for a week I was hooked on the sport."

"Then later I taught Faye McLeod, and she encouraged a lot of the other wives and girlfriends to try it. We've got about a dozen Colts' wives playing now, with more ready to give it a try. Racquetball is a big social thing for us. It got us wives together."

"After all the watching and cheering we do - it's great to be out there playing ourselves." ●



Danni Jones (back court), returns Ginny Dutton's well placed shot.

After the game Lee said she and her husband are planning a combination health club and racquetball facility in Portsmouth, NH.

"When Bruce plays racquetball, he's quick to pick up the angles and his eye-hand coordination is excellent. I guess that stems from football. I'm playing a lot now, to keep in shape, and to give him a run for it when we play."

12 Tests to Measure Your Fitness for Racquetball

by Ellington Darden, Ph.D.

Darden earned a Ph.D. in physical education from Florida State University, where he's done post/doctoral work in food and nutrition.

I watched in amazement as Jimmy Clayton moved across the court in reckless abandon. He was one of the best racquetball players I had seen in the central Florida area.

Then it happened!

As Jimmy reached for a difficult backhand return, his left knee gave way, and he hit the floor in a helpless state. Later that day I learned that Jimmy had a partially torn ligament on the medial side of his left knee.

Next morning in the office I looked through my files for Jimmy's strength testing records. He had been training off and on with us for the last two years. Just as I suspected, when Jimmy went through our initial testing his left quadriceps and hamstrings muscles were approximately 17 percent weaker than the same muscles on his right thigh.

This muscular imbalance in Jimmy's left thigh may have been the primary factor in his knee damage. Research performed at the University of Texas shows that 80 percent of all knee injuries occurs to the weaker of the two legs.

After the initial testing Jimmy was warned about the possibility of an injury occurring to his weaker leg, especially since he was actively involved in racquetball. He trained hard for several weeks and did much to correct the imbalance. One of Jimmy's biggest mistakes, however, was his belief that he should concentrate on his upper body strength. Jimmy's legs always

lagged behind his upper body development. Too bad he had to learn the hard way the importance of a well balanced, strength training program.

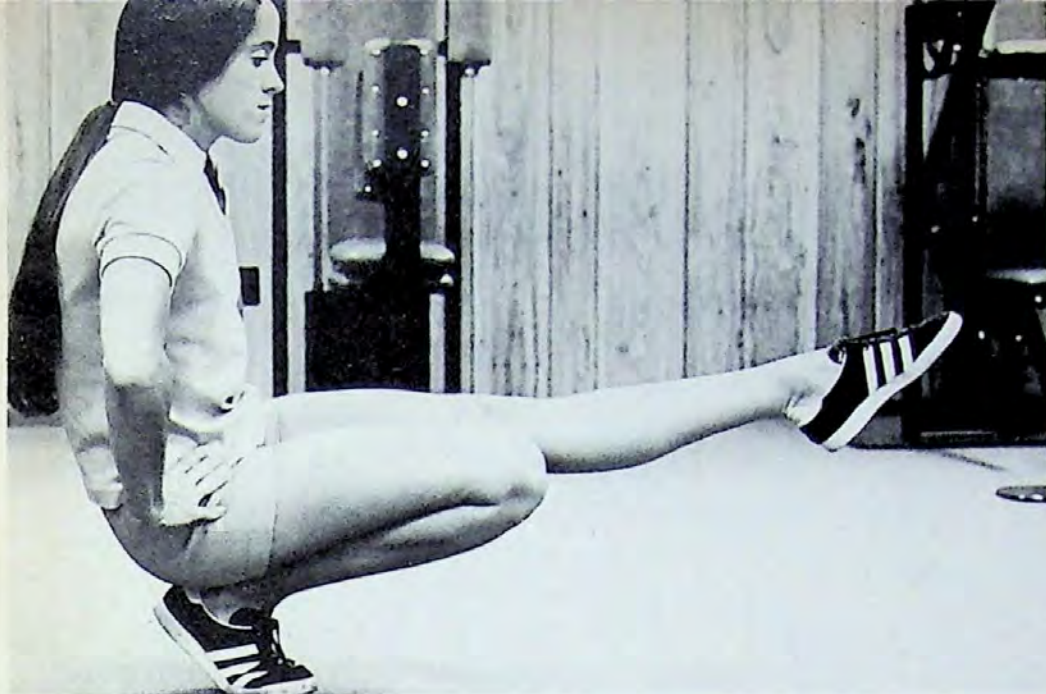
Luckily for Jimmy his injured knee didn't require surgery. Over a three month period he was able to successfully rehabilitate it to the point where there was no measurable difference between the strength of his legs. Since his injury, Jimmy has enjoyed over a year of injury free racquetball . . . and he gives much of the credit to a vigorous conditioning and evaluation program that he follows year round.

Jimmy Clayton is unique in his approach to racquetball. Most of the millions of American players pay little attention to their physical condition. As a result many suffer injuries. But even those who are enthusiastic about conditioning rarely know how to measure, evaluate, and judge progress during a fitness program.

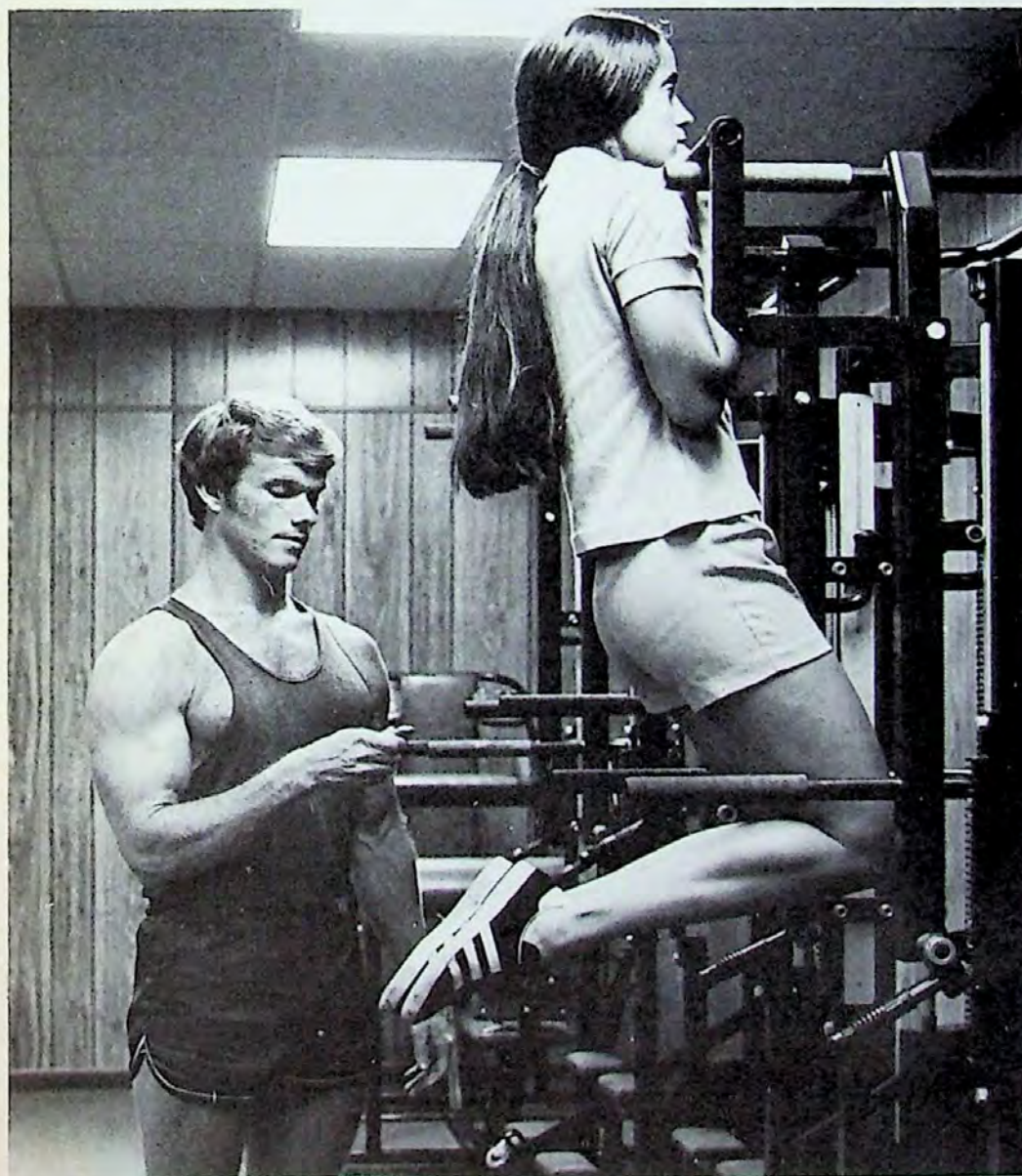
To help bridge this gap, I've developed a battery of 12 tests. Taken as a whole these tests measure your overall physical condition. A high score indicates you're ready to begin playing racquetball with little probability of injury. (Note: this battery of tests applies to both male and females. While men, for example, may have an advantage in most strength tests, it will even out because the women will have an advantage in balance and flexibility.)



1. A majority of the knee injuries in racquetball occur to the weaker of your legs. Since muscular strength and muscular size are clearly related, your right leg should be approximately the same size as your left leg. Carefully measure, to the nearest eighth of an inch, and compare both of your legs.



2. It takes strong hips and legs, as well as good balance, to get maximum points for the one-legged squat.



3. The starting position of the negative chin is shown in this photo. As you slowly lower your body, have a friend call out the time in seconds (5, 10, 15, etc.).

The only equipment needed is a ruler, measuring tape, horizontal bar, parallel bars, a watch with a second hand, pencil and paper. Here's the test:

1. *Comparison measurements of thighs and calves (strength: legs).*

There is a definite relationship between the size of your leg muscles and the strength of your leg muscles. Both of your legs should be approximately the same size. Get a tape measure and record the circumference of the leg two inches and nine inches above the upper edge of the knee cap, and at the widest point on the calf. Now compare the three measurements of your left leg with the three measurements of your right leg. If there is no more than one-half inch between any of the three comparisons, give yourself 10 points; over one-half inch difference rates 0 points.

Score: _____

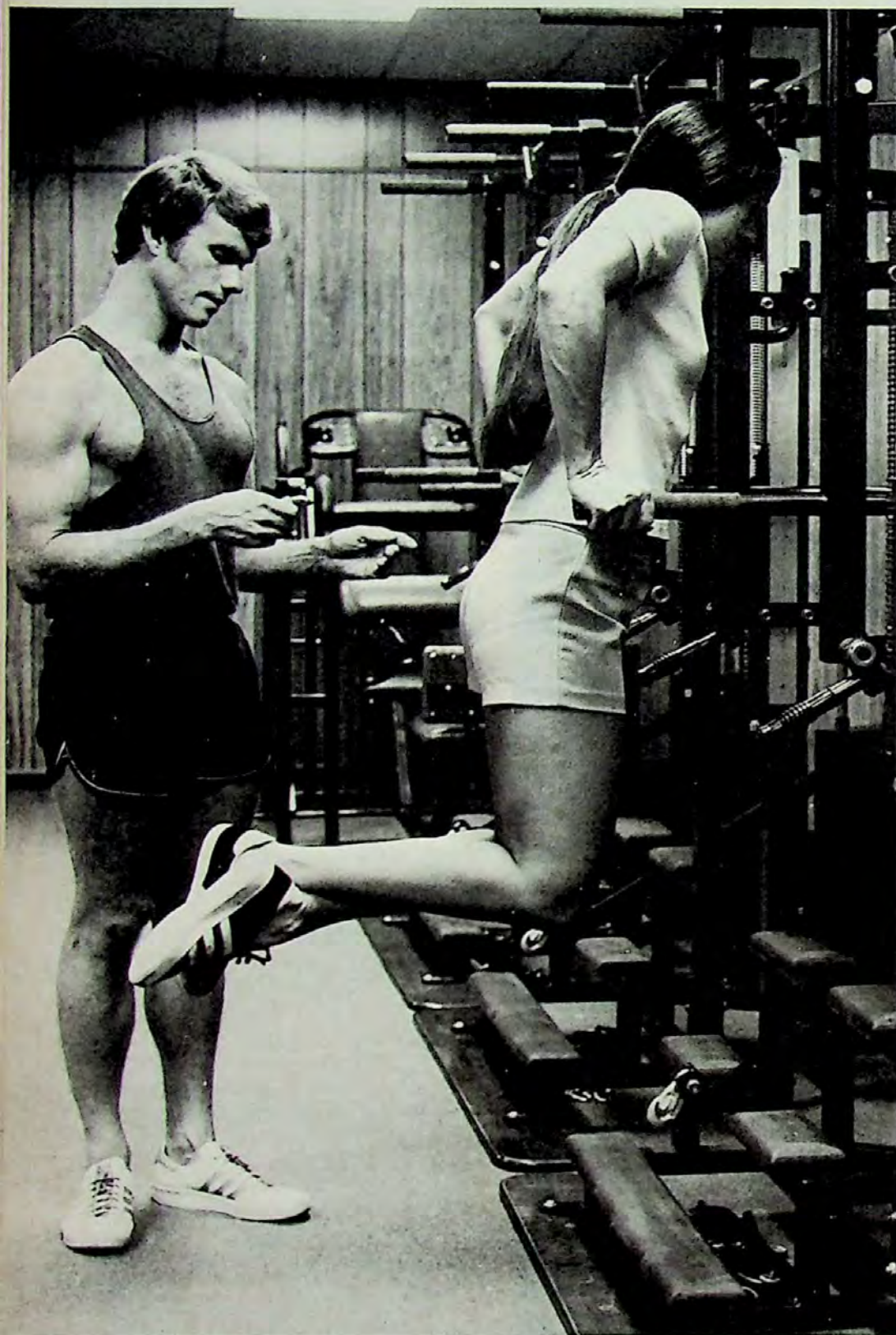
2. *One-legged squat (strength: hips and legs).* Stand on your left foot, with right foot in front. Smoothly sit down on left heel with right leg raised and stand up without touching the floor or losing your balance. Repeat using other leg. Give yourself 5 points per leg if you pass this test.

Score: _____

3. *Negative chin on horizontal bar (strength: grip, biceps, torso).*

Stabilize yourself (using a chair) in the top or contracted position of a chin-up. Your chin should be over the bar, hands holding with an underhand grip, and legs curled behind. Lower your body as slow as possible to a hanging position (until your arms are completely straight). Men: 60-second lowering time = 10 points; 45 seconds = 5 points. Women: 30-second lowering time = 10 points; 20 seconds = 5 points.

Score: _____



4. The negative dip tests the strength of your triceps, shoulders and chest. Start the test with your arms locked (or slightly bent, since there's little stress on the muscles when the arms are extended) and stop the test when you're in the fully stretched position with your shoulders near your hands. Again it's a good idea to have a friend keep time of your lowering speed.

4. *Negative dip on parallel bars* (strength: triceps, shoulders, chest). Using a chair climb into the top position with arms locked. Slowly, inch by inch, lower yourself to the bottom position by bending your arms. Men: 60-second lowering time = 10 points, 45 seconds = 5 points. Women: 30-second lowering time = 10 points, 20 seconds = 5 points.

Score: _____

5. *Hanging leg raise* (strength: abdominals and hip flexors). Hang at arms' length from a horizontal bar. While keeping your arms straight, raise your legs and touch the overhead bar with your feet. Smoothly return to the bottom position and repeat as many times as possible. Men: 8 full repetitions = 10 points, 4 reps = 5 points. Women: 4 repetitions = 10 points, 2 reps = 5 points.

Score: _____

5. This test is also an excellent exercise for your stomach and frontal hip muscles. From a hanging position smoothly raise your feet and touch the overhead bar. Lower until your feet almost touch the floor, and repeat as many times as possible. Do not count the repetitions if your feet touch the floor or if your feet fail to touch the bar.





6. *Pinch test (body fat).* Using your thumb and forefinger, pinch as much skin and fat as you can on the side of your waist (between your lowest rib and hip bone). With a ruler handy measure the distance between your fingertips to the nearest eighth of an inch. If your measurement is a half inch or less, you score 10 points. Three quarters of an inch to a half inch = 5 points. Over three quarters of an inch = 0 points.

Score: _____

6. *Pinch and measure (the distance between your fingertips with a ruler) the thickness of the skin the underlying fat as best you can on the side of your waist. A lean athlete should be able to easily pull the skin away from the muscle, while an obese individual will have greater difficulty because of the thick layer of fat that lies between the skin and the muscle.*

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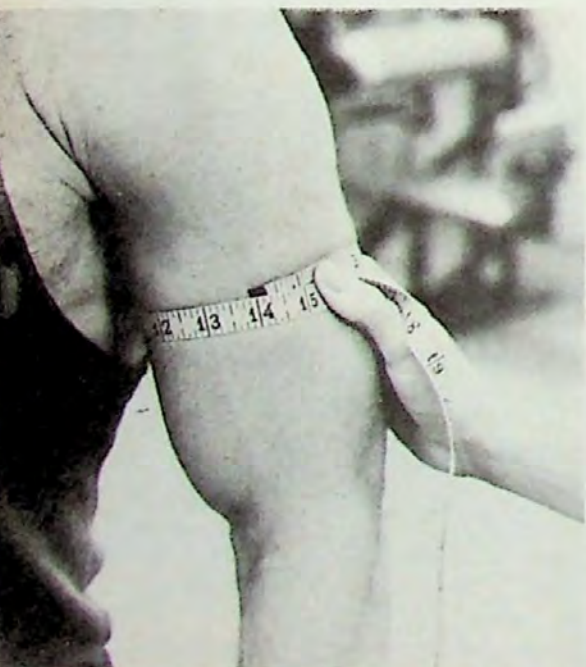
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7. *Comparison measurements of hanging and flexed biceps (body fat).* One of your objectives in conditioning should be to maximize your muscular strength and minimize your body fat. A good way to determine if you are making progress toward this goal is to keep a weekly record of the difference between your relaxed and contracted arm (biceps) measurements. A racquetball player who is lean will have a difference of from one to two inches. If you fall into this category, you rate 10 points. Less than one inch = 0 points. The reason you get such a dramatic contrast between the measurements of a lean athlete and an overfat athlete is the simple fact that you *can't flex fat*. Remember the greater the difference between these measurements, the leaner you are.
Score: _____



7. Measure the relaxed arm midway between the elbow and shoulder. The tape in the first photo reads $13\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Now with the upper arm parallel with the floor and the biceps fully flexed, place the tape at right angles to the bone. The second measurement is $15\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The difference between this subject's relaxed and flexed biceps is $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches, an indication of a small amount of body fat.

8. Racquetball requires not only strong muscles, but also flexible muscles. All stretching movements should be performed slowly and smoothly. You'll feel this one primarily in the back of your thighs.



8. *Hamstrings-lower back stretch (flexibility).* Sit on the floor with your legs straight and in front of you. Place an eight-inch high book upright between your knees. Then, keeping your legs straight and flat on the floor, bend forward and touch your forehead to the top of the book. Give yourself 10 points for doing this one, or 0 if you can't.

Score: _____

9. *Back arch (flexibility).* Lying on your stomach, with your fingers laced behind your neck and your feet anchored on the floor, raise your chin as high as possible and hold. Have a friend measure the vertical distance from your chin to the floor. A measurement of 18 inches or more gives you 10 points; 15 to 18 inches = 5 points; less than 15 inches = 0.

Score: _____



9. *Midsection and back flexibility can prevent many injuries, especially if you're a beginning racquetball player. Notice that this athlete is quite flexible as there's 23 inches between his chin and the floor.*



10. Test your balance by holding this position for 10 seconds. Remember your eyes must remain closed and you cannot move your foot.



11. In one quick movement, you must go from kneeling to standing – without losing your balance. This photo shows the starting and finishing positions.

10. *Stork stand (balance)*. Stand on your left foot. Hold the bottom of your right foot against the medial side of your left knee. Place hands on hips. Close your eyes and hold the position for 10 seconds without losing your balance or moving your foot. You get 10 points if you perform this test on the first try; 5 points on the second try; 0 points thereafter.
Score: _____

11. *Kneeling to standing (balance)*. Kneel on both knees and rest the back of your toes on the floor. Swing arms and jump to a standing position. Do not rock backwards on toes or lose your balance. This test is worth 10 points on the first attempt, or 5 points on the second attempt.
Score: _____

12. *Breath holding (heart-lung endurance)*. Run in place for 90 seconds, lifting your feet at least four inches from the floor. Then take three deep breaths and hold the last one for 30 seconds. If successful give yourself 10 points.
Score: _____



12. The running-in-place/breath-holding test is an estimate of your heart-lung endurance. Be sure to breathe deeply while you're running.

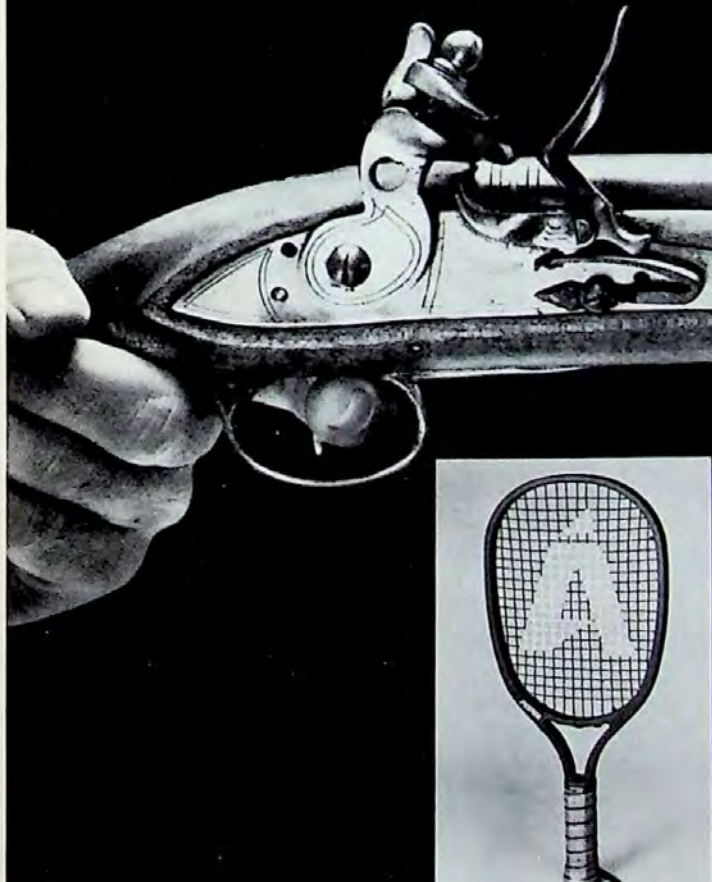
This battery of tests is certainly not easy. In fact it's guaranteed to separate the amateurs from the professionals. Here's how to interpret the total score. (Maximum score = 120)

100 - 120 points. You're in pretty good shape — ready to begin playing racquetball. But in addition to racquetball you should continue a vigorous conditioning program at least twice a week.

80 - 100 points. Start working on your weak areas. Any racquetball playing should be done with the understanding that injuries usually occur to the weak areas of the body.

Below 80 points. Start a conditioning routine to get your score above 80. To avoid injuries keep your racquetball play at a moderate level until you've passed the 80 mark. ●

Coming up in future issues of *National Racquetball*: Ellington Darden tells you how conditioning can correct the weaknesses this test uncovered.



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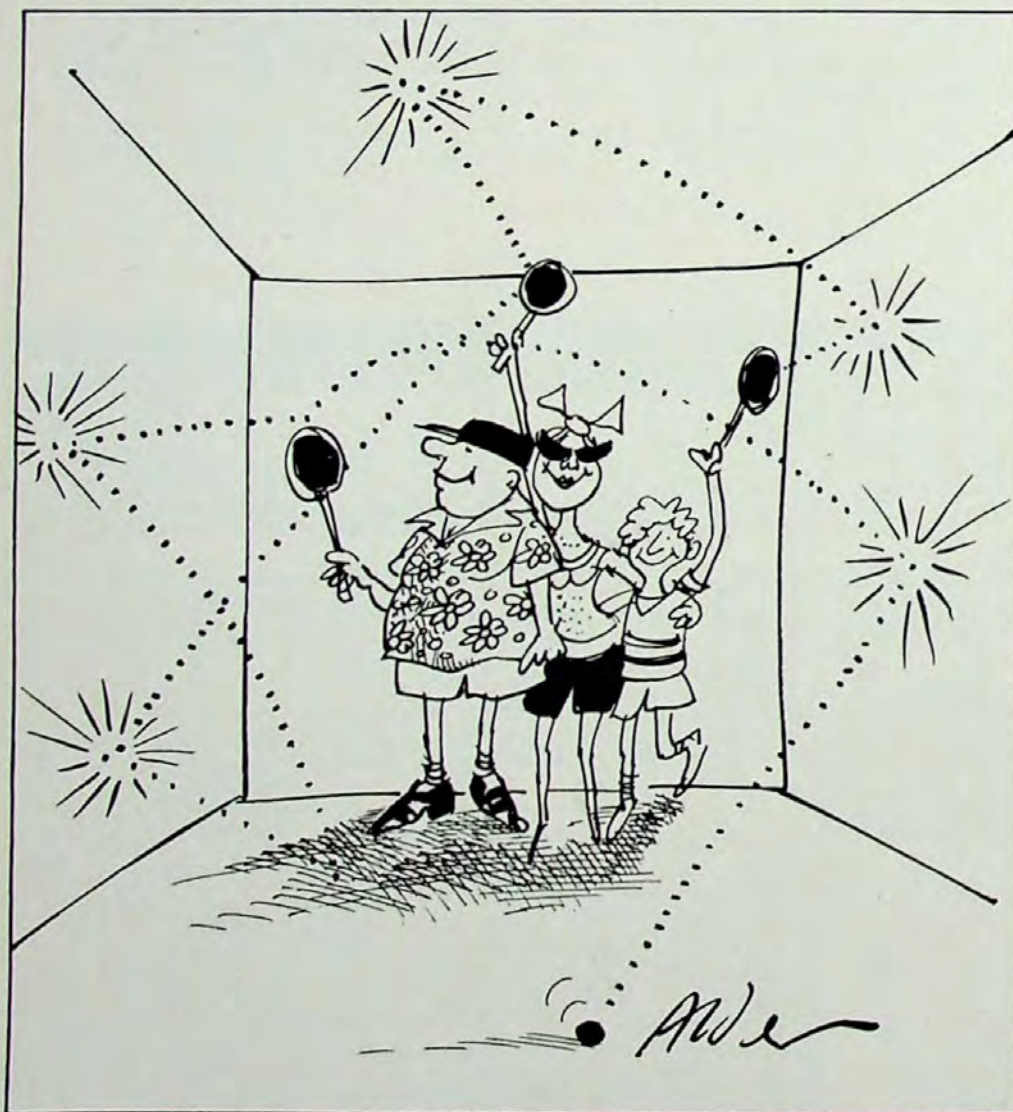
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Boom Ball Game

Two months ago *National Racquetball* ran photos of Englishmen playing racquetball in a squash court. Here we present one Englishman's portrayal of what American players look like.

The cartoon and portions of a story in *The Sunday Times*, London, are reprinted with permission of the newspaper.



Saul Bellow plays it. So does Illinois Governor James Thompson and six million other Americans.

It resembles squash to some extent, but squash largely remains the preserve of Eastern seaboard private universities. Also unlike squash, beginners can have fun almost from the word go. It's played on a court 40 feet by 20 feet, with a 20 foot ceiling. The rules are similar to squash, except the ceiling is used as a fifth wall.

One reason for racquetball's attraction for the tyro is that the ball bounces so much that the player can miss it once and still catch it in the centre of the court on the rebound from the back wall. Thus it has become a great family sport where husbands, wives and children can play together — 40 percent of the country's players are women. ●

Have you run across a major racquetball story in the general press? Send it along to *National Racquetball*, Attn: Managing Editor, for consideration in this section.

IT'S OFFICIAL!



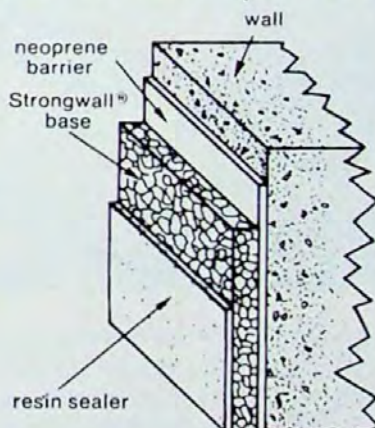
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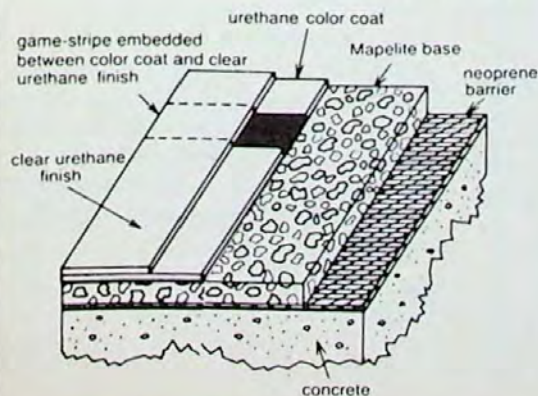


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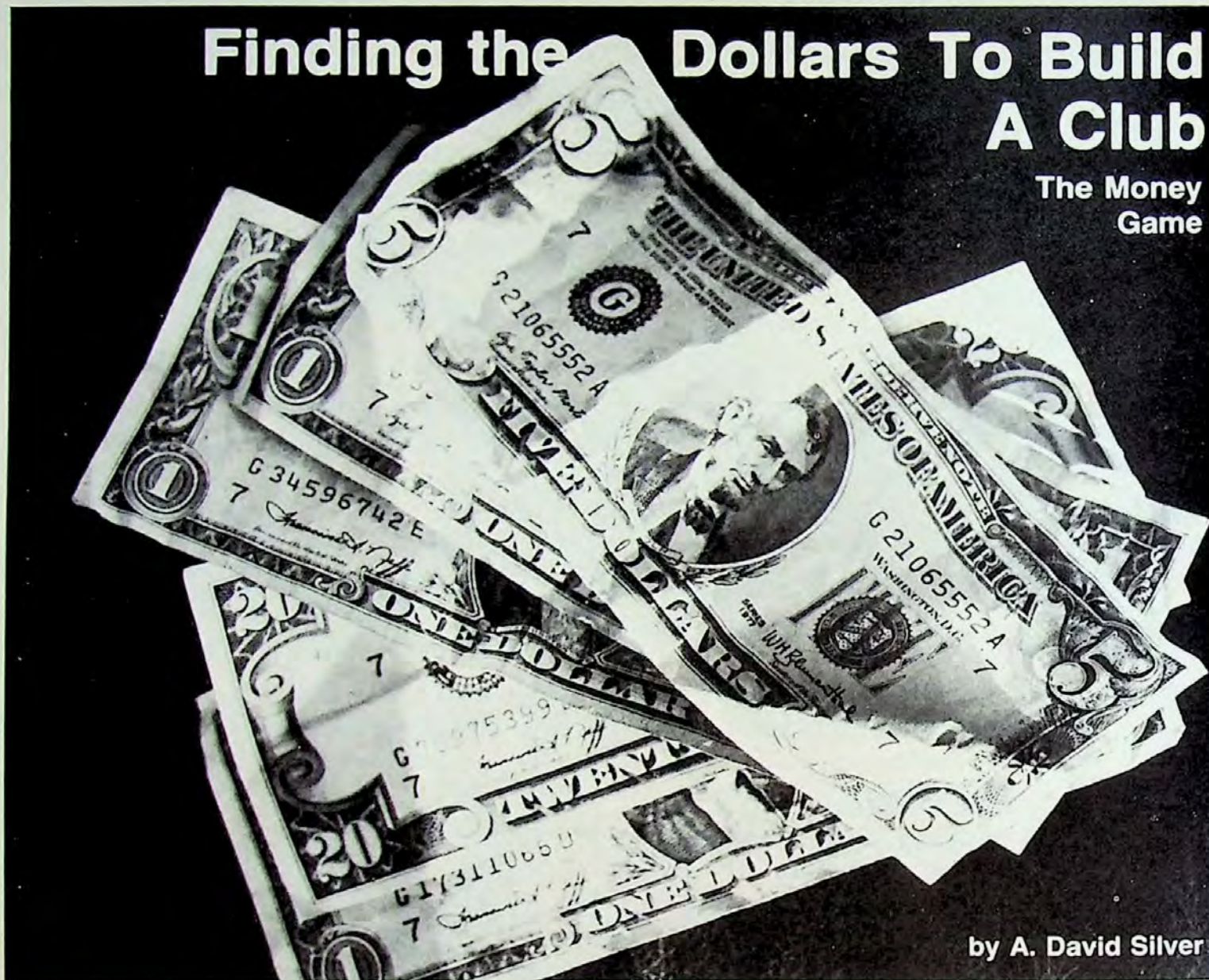
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Finding the Dollars To Build A Club

The Money Game



by A. David Silver

As an investment banker to new and rapidly growing companies I have been exposed to an increasing number of racquetball entrepreneurs seeking capital for individual clubs and chains. The result has been that I have become active in raising capital for racquetball clubs, and have become an investor as well.

Not only is racquetball growing as a popular sport, but it is also one of the fastest growing new industries around. Racquetball clubs will have long lives because they offer the public more than sports. Racquetball clubs are

places to meet people, places to work off calories, to keep and stay fit, to entertain friends and to engage in competition without training to develop a high level of competence. One club in the midwest is operating at capacity during the daytime, and with a nursery serving over 30 children.

Another club in the south is planning to convert its center court to a discotheque on weekend nights. Another club has a snack bar where the selection rivals that of a small health foods store.

Racquetball entrepreneurs are creative. A great many of the clubs are profitable in their first year of operations. When I meet a particularly well-qualified racquetball entrepreneur I encourage him (or her) to expand to a chain of 20 or so clubs because at that size, the chain is salable to a major corporation for stock or cash, or to the public via a public offering. Operating one or two clubs creates income; building a chain creates wealth. To get from here to there, however, requires systematizing the money raising process.

No Production, No Inventory

The racquetball business, like the retail business in general, requires no production; and unlike operating a store, the racquetball business requires no inventory. Retail chains frequently are profitable at sales per square foot of \$100 per annum. Racquetball chains are profitable at one-third of that ratio, and without capital tied up in inventory. Among other things this single factor, which is otherwise known in financial parlance as high return on equity, makes racquetball investments very popular and will attract the eye of large corporations when it comes time to convert income to wealth.

Adding to the attractiveness of racquetball as excellent investments is their leverage. Building the "boxes", as the courts are called, requires from \$60,000 to \$70,000 (including land, drawings, fees, electrical and plumbing) depending on the geographical area. Hence a 10 court club costs from \$400,000 to \$700,000 to erect; and a 15 court club from \$600,000 to \$1,050,000.

Secured lenders are generally willing to finance a portion of the construction costs because they are able to collateralize their loans with real property, generally regarded as safer collateral than inventory and accounts receivable. The more leverage or debt that can be borrowed for a club, the less equity requirement, and the more ownership that the entrepreneur can keep for himself. In certain instances federal and state agencies will guarantee loans to racquetball clubs up to 90 percent of the face amount of the loan, hence the need for very little equity and the greater the rate of return to the entrepreneurs.

Prior to our undertaking the money need for a racquetball entrepreneur we attempt to determine his understanding of the entrepreneurial process. We are not, nor are our lender and investor friends, interested in fast buck promoters who will sacrifice the quality of their product for maximum profit. The existence of racquetball as a growth business means that a problem (demand) exists and that a solution (supply) is being very well delivered. We want to back the survivors in this business.

Solving More Than One "Problem"

A "problem" is nothing more and nothing less than a "market in search of solution"; an innovative product or service is quite simply a solution to a problem. Racquetball solves several problems simultaneously, hence its enormous popularity: (1) exercise (2) weight reduction (3) a place to meet people and (4) a new activity that is fun and competitive. Racquetball entrepreneurs believe that they can provide these solutions to selected markets and in so doing, achieve great wealth. Racquetball entrepreneurs are from a variety of backgrounds — real estate, commodities, government, sports, finance and so forth — but not all of them understand the entrepreneurial process.

One does not need to be intelligent to succeed as an entrepreneur. Most self made businessmen are of average intelligence. Further one does not require special skill to be a successful

entrepreneur. Skills are commodities that can be hired. Judgement is the key ingredient. For example notice the success of Sonny Werblin who was responsible for launching the New York Jets and the American Football League by hiring Joe Namath, the skill factor.

Another thing that many entrepreneurs have in common is that they do not know how to raise venture capital, how much, what form or from what source. Frequently they do not know the differences between debt, equity or leases and sometimes suffer excruciating financial pain.

I have studied seriously the methods by which racquetball clubs and other new companies raise launch capital. There are several interesting sources of capital that were not around five years ago, and I suspect that newer and more creative sources are just around the corner.

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Sixteen Methods of Financing a Racquetball Club

1. Business Development

Corporations:

Twenty-eight states have these marvelous lending institutions. They are job creation oriented and financed by private corporations and banks for the purpose of making high risk loans where the bottom line is jobs.

2. EDA:

State Economic Development Agencies are not in themselves sources of financing, but they know the many and various sources of venture capital in their states. Frequently the EDA can be helpful in arranging Business Development Corp., JDA or Industrial Revenue Bond Financing. Since racquetball clubs usually involve a need for more than \$1,000,000, the EDA could be a helpful partner.

3. Franchising:

McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken began in this manner. The franchisee pays an up-front, one time fee, and if you are able to sell a large number of franchises, your capital requirements are easily fulfilled.

4. Insurance for

Loans:

A number of insurance companies have begun writing insurance policies to protect equipment lenders and lessors. For a modest premium the repayment of their loan is insured and financing for racquetball clubs can be more easily arranged thereby.

5. JDA:

Several states provide second mortgage financing through their Job Development Agencies. In New York State, the JDA provides 40 percent second mortgage loans at 7½ percent interest for a term of 20 years.

6. Industrial Revenue

Bonds:

In order for a town to attract a new club which creates jobs and an expanded local economy, the community must offer something to the entrepreneurs. In the absence of some of the alternative methods cited the most popular form of community financing is the industrial revenue bond. This is an obligation of the municipality, which will own the plant and lease it to the company, to pay the bondholders,

generally local banks and citizens, and the yield represents tax free income. Several racquetball clubs have used this financing method.

7. Joint-Venture:

This financing method involves placing the club on a large corporation's property, at its expense. You operate it for the corporation whose employees and spouses have first crack at courts until 6 p.m., and operate it for the public thereafter, with an equitable profit-sharing arrangement.

8. MESBIC:

If you are "disadvantaged" in the eyes of the Federal Government — ethnically, economically, or if you are a veteran or older person — the MESBIC program can provide your source of capital. In the early 1970's the Office of Minority Business Enterprises (OMBE) was created under the aegis of the Department of Commerce primarily to assist ethnic minorities in obtaining financing to launch their businesses. OMBE purchased the preferred stock of MESBIC's (Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Companies) who received five dollars from OMBE for every one dollar that they invested. Over time the MESBIC program has achieved only modest successes and the definition of the types of businesses in which a MESBIC may invest has been broadened to include veterans and certain kinds of disadvantaged people.

9. Public Offerings:

Although a popular form of raising venture capital in the 1960's there is today no public stock market for untested companies. The exception is the sale of very low priced stock (\$.01 to \$.10) on a self-underwritten intrastate offering. A few racquetball chains have used this method for several clubs.

10. Private venture capital funds:

One of the most intelligent methods of raising venture capital is to sell convertible securities to one or more of the private venture capital firms. There are about 400 in the United States and they generally provide technical and management assistance along with their capital.

11. Small Business Administration:

The most important source of venture capital in the United States is the "SBA" which makes direct loans to small companies (a very long rulebook defines "small") and provides loan guarantees up to 90 percent for small companies. The SBA also provides consultants to small companies that request the service. There are SBA offices in all large cities and their maximum loan limit in combination with about \$100,000 of equity, is sufficient to launch one 10 court club.

12. Tax-Shelters:

If your new company has a programmable first year loss, you can attract funds from individuals in high income tax brackets who will enter into a partnership with you to purchase your loss with the proceeds of their investment. Although a complicated means of launching a company it has been used successfully in real estate financings for years. Recently tax shelters have become popular in launching magazines, sports teams, medical clinics, record publishing, book publishing, travel and other clubs and computer packages.

13. University Endowment Funds:

The University of Chicago was for a time one of the largest sources of venture capital in the country. The University of Rochester has a "Funny Money Fund" in which they look for new Xeroxes and Kodak's — the basis of their huge endowment. You might ask your university to back you. After all Bob Noyce of Intel, Corp., one of the 1970's success stories, has made his alma mater, Grinnell College, extremely happy with their investment.

14. Venture Capital Subsidiaries of Large Corporations:

There are approximately 50 large industrial corporations that provide venture capital to new companies. Exxon Corp. has the most successful venture capital program followed by Textron Corp. and Time, Inc. which financed Craig Hall's racquetball chain after he had launched the first three clubs. The corporate venture capital subsidiaries tend to have deeper pockets and longer outlooks than other venture capital investors.



15. Wealthy Individuals:

Frequently wealthy individuals desire to spread their investments across a risk-award spectrum with perhaps 5 percent allocated to venture capital.

The Rockefellers, Whitneys, Phipps, Paysons, Rothschilds, Rosenwalds and others have sponsored venture capital funds for many years. They are generally patient but cautious investors.

16. Family and Friends:

If your new company is carefully planned and the potential for error is reduced to a minimum, why not offer an investment opportunity to members of your family or to close friends? They could finance you until you reach a second stage where other forms of financing may be more easily attainable.

If one general observation may be made about how racquetball clubs are financed it is that a number of methods are used simultaneously. Normally the racquetball entrepreneurs who are interested in building chains to create future wealth are able to raise more capital on better terms than the more promotional operators and those interested in maximum short term profit. ●

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Spaulding Racquetball Club
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**Tulsa Racquetball -
Aerobics Club**
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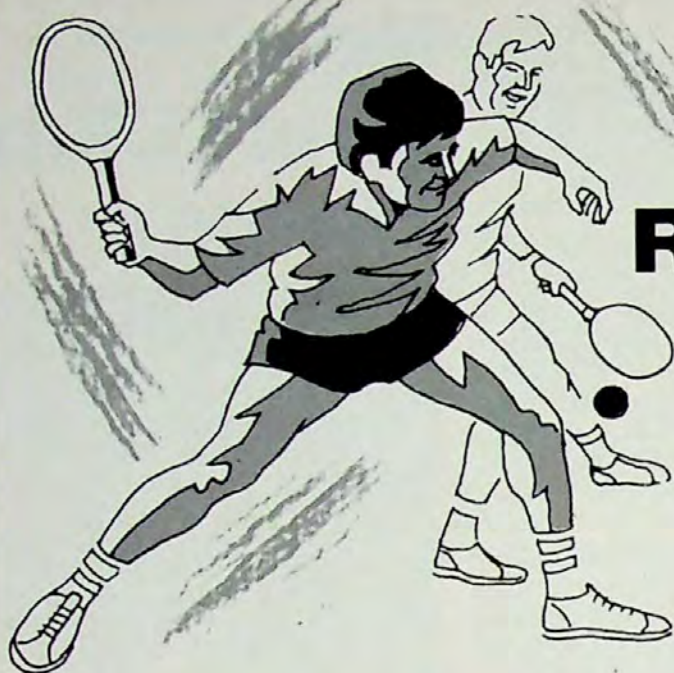
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- UNIVERSITY RACQUETBALL CLUB
Pontiac, Michigan
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- THE BACK WALL
Bath, Ohio
(216) 666-1108
- THE GLASS COURT
Lombard, Illinois
(312) 629-3390
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Women In Racquetball



Carol Brusslan

Little Book, Big Message

Fifty-six pages in a five by six and one-half inch book have helped put racquetball into schools you've been reading about in *National Racquetball's* two-part campus story.

Those 56 pages, sandwiched between two more esoteric pursuits — team handball (closer to basketball than to racquetball's forerunner) and orienteering (a demanding version of a treasure hunt) — have kept 14,000 members of the National Association for Girls and Women in Sports informed about racquetball for the last two years.

When the 80-year-old NAGWS first decided that racquetball was important enough for one of its guidebooks, the editors asked Jo Oliver, PE professor at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, to compile information on the sport. Working under the tightest

of deadlines Oliver and four other California volunteers came up with an amazingly complete series of stories, charts and lists to help high school and college PE teachers and athletic directors run racquetball programs in their schools.

One of those volunteers was Joy Fujimoto — at that time Joy Koppel, racquetball instructor at California State University, Long Beach.

Now Fujimoto — player, teacher and promoter of our game — is updating the racquetball guide. Working with her are Karen Amburgey, teacher at Estancia High School and Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, CA; Harriet Lavenue, assistant professor of physical education and women's racquetball coach at Memphis State; Ron Cathor, southern California racquetball coach; Peggy Pruitt, Ph.D., Ohio State coordinator of athletics, and James S. Horgan, Ph.D., coordinator of graduate studies and research in bio-kinetics at Temple University, Philadelphia.

These racquetball notables need your help. They're looking for short articles on subjects that will help colleges and high schools teach racquetball. (Topics for the 1976-78 NAGWS Guide ranged from rules to safety to kill shot drills.)

If you have some expertise in racquetball — especially if you've taught it — and you're willing to give away your know-how for the good of the game, mail your article idea to Joy Fujimoto, P. O. Box 958, Santa Ana, CA 92702.

Fujimoto's deadline is early December, so be ready for a quick reply.



Joy Fujimoto

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The star from Texas cuts her hair . . .

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Today's game compliments contemporary art job . . .

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Curly Peggy

Steding Sheds Her Pompadour

The next time you see Peggy Steding her head might be covered with curls.

Racquetball's most fondly regarded veteran is letting the sides of her hair grow to match her curly top — a radical departure from her famous former hairdo, a hairdo that one racquetball writer called "a cross between Jerry Lee Lewis' boogie woogie styling and Rod Stewart's carrot impression."

Those comments, written last summer, were not what caused one of the women's all-time money winners to make the change.

"I'd been thinking about it for six months. I was getting tired of the style I'd been wearing the last eight or nine years. I just decided to do it — I just jumped off the deep end."

Steding took the plunge in her hometown, Odessa, TX, beauty shop on June 27, right after the Nationals, where Karin Walton, in her first year on the pro tour, beat Peggy in the quarters.

"I should have done it before the Nationals," Steding jokes. "Everyone would have been staring at my hair."

Steding said she stuck to the other hairdo through the years "because it was so easy to play in." She finds the new style even easier than the high top version, which she had to set in eight medium size rollers every time she washed it.

"This one is wash n' wear," Steding reports. "I wash it, dry it and brush it through."

"It doesn't feel any different to play in than the old way. The important thing is that I still don't have to worry about my hair — either way it's not going anywhere in the middle of a match."



— Paul G. Tittle Jr. photo



Playing Tip Number 13

"Women generally err in the direction of dance-stepping," says Jean Sauser in the introduction that Photographer Arthur Shay wrote for *Inside Racquetball for Women*, which he co-authored with Sauser, who's a teacher and a top pro.

This tip from Shay and Sauser's book, with its mistake-correction approach, is an example of the footwork that might have to be changed if you've had more background in dance than athletics.

Inside Racquetball for Women, published by Contemporary Books, is available at pro shops, sporting goods outlets and bookstores. *National Racquetball* is printing excerpts from the book in this "Women in Racquetball" section.

Mistake: Back Foot Lead

Among the many common errors in foot position made by women racquetball players is back foot lead. When you step into the wrong foot position for striking the ball, with your back foot ahead of your lead foot, poor shots result. (In very advanced play a slight back foot lead is used for cross-court passing shots, but this lead is not as extreme as the back foot lead we are condemning here.)

As with other foot faults you will probably (and erroneously) hit the ball off the back foot, causing a loss of power. Without the full power of your coordinated body swing, all you have working for you is your arm and your racquet. If you should manage to hit the ball off your lead foot, your shoulders will help a bit, but you'll probably unintentionally hit the ball up the middle.



Correction: Lead with Your Leg Opposite Your Racquet

To correct this common foot fault simply reverse your stance. If you just reverse your foot positions in a kind of skipping exercise, your body weight will automatically be behind your swing. This will take strain off your arm so that your swing will feel comparatively effortless, and with practice your placement of the ball will improve a lot. For openers your improved stance will help you eliminate hitting the ball right up the middle into the waiting racquet of your opponent.

A effective drill designed to incorporate this body correction into your game is to throw balls at the back wall while assuming a good stance, then to move back and hit those balls straight down the line, close to the wall.

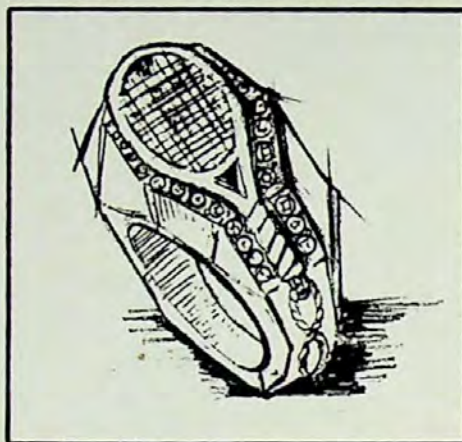


The Ultimate Racquetball Gift

Racquets, balls, books . . . goggles, gloves, shoes . . . as well as neckties and necklaces with racquet motifs will emerge from holiday wrappings in the homes of thousands of racquetball players. And the gifts, purchased in club pro shops or sporting goods stores, will make thousands of racquetball players happy.

But only a few players will be receiving the Christmas presents

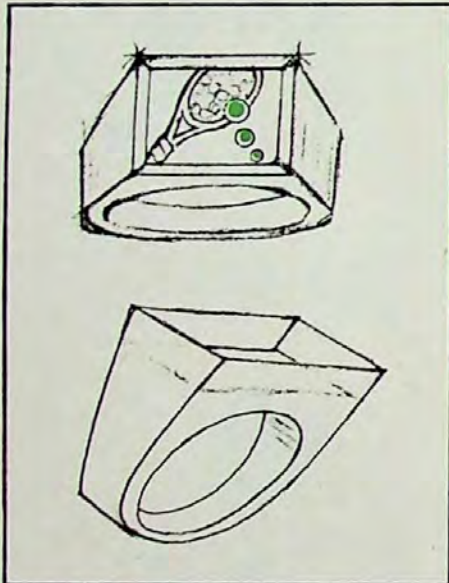
An original work of jewelry art goes from Dennis Lampert's two dimensional concept to a finished, functional piece. This is Lampert's men's racquetball ring which he fashions in one or two shades of gold and with or without diamonds.



National Racquetball Extravaganzas

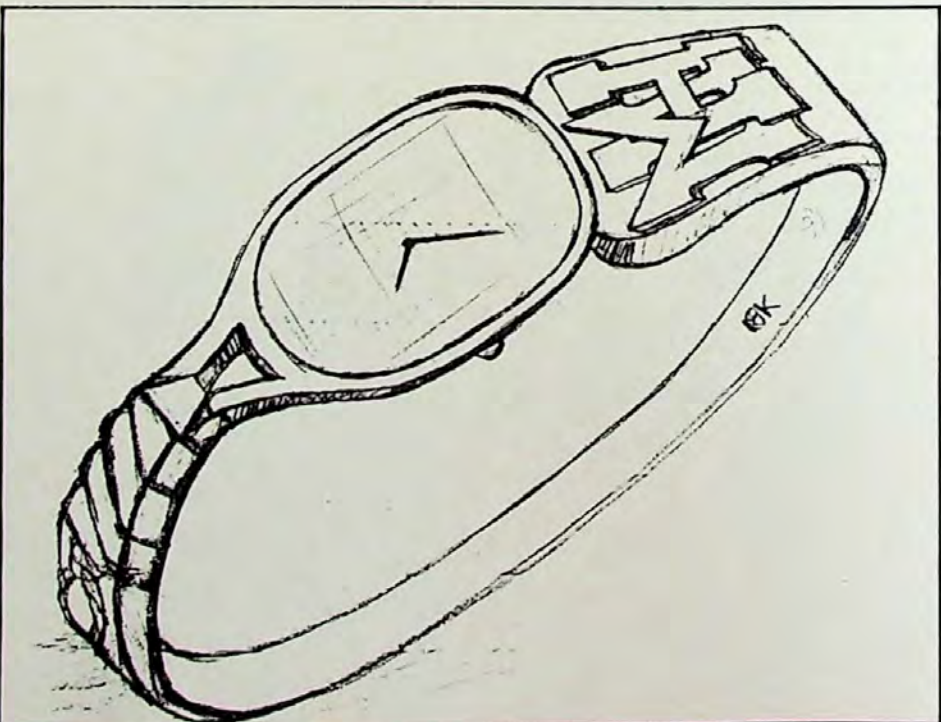
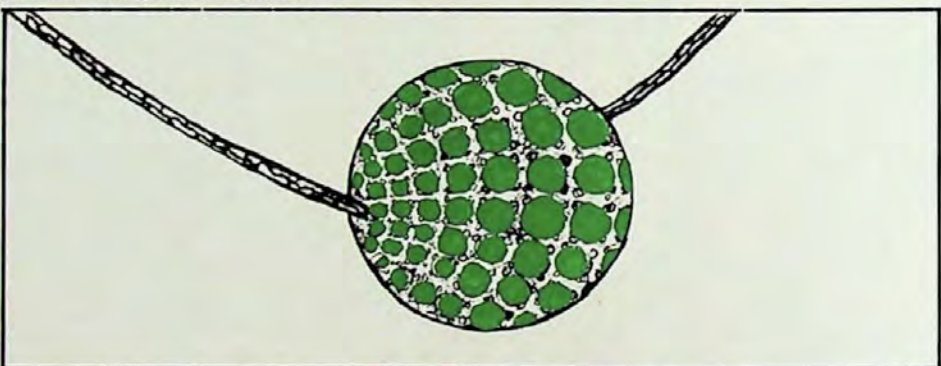
Emerald Pro Ball

One hundred matched emeralds set in a cluster effect on 18K gold produce a spherical representation of the pro ball. A hidden rod lets the ball spin freely on the chain of 18K gold Italian links.



Corner Kill Ring

Three emeralds of descending size cross Lampert's Corner Kill Ring, also available as cuff links or a pendant. Lampert will make this ring with diamond racquet or a diamond court floor.



Racquet Bracelet Watch

Lampert can work initials, zodiac signs, a logo - any design motif - into the band of this timepiece with an 18K gold case in the shape of a racquet.

pictured here. These are *National Racquetball's* ultimate holiday suggestions — 18K gold handcrafted jewelry encrusted with diamonds and emeralds.

Dennis Lampert, who created the pieces for this *National Racquetball* feature, first joined his art to athletics in a tennis ball pendant he designed for the Virginia Slims tournament winner. The diamond studded neckpiece is known among jewel collecting tennis players as the Evonne Goolagong tennis ball (She won the tournament).

Other major commissions Lampert has received include one from DeBeers Consolidated for a diamond band for a western hat company, from Chevrolet for an auto charm and from Dr. Scholl for a chain of tiny gold feet. Lampert has

filled individual orders ranging from a diamond pacifier to a diamond athletic supporter.

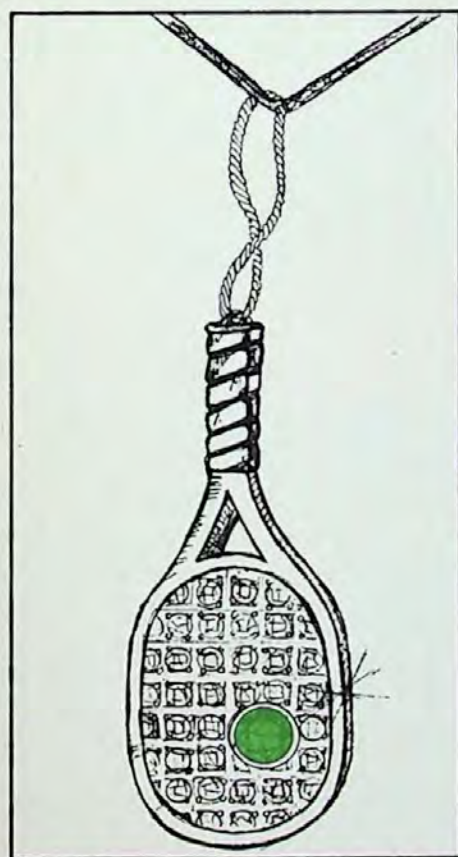
Jewelry ideas pop into Lampert's head faster than a ball whips off of Marty Hogan's racquet. Once Lampert dreams up a concept, like the men's Corner Kill ring, practicality takes over. He's a master at solving problems that make a work of art into a utilitarian object. The problem behind the corner Kill, for example, was that "emeralds are too soft for a man to wear," Lampert explained. His solution was to make a shadowbox out of the walls of the court and place the emeralds and racquet inside. The court sides protect the stones even if a player hits the back of his hand against an actual court wall.

Lampert's handcrafted pieces begin in the \$700 price range for gold rings without precious stones and can run into the thousands for the men's racquet watch or the women's Emerald Pro Ball pendant designed for *National Racquetball* readers.

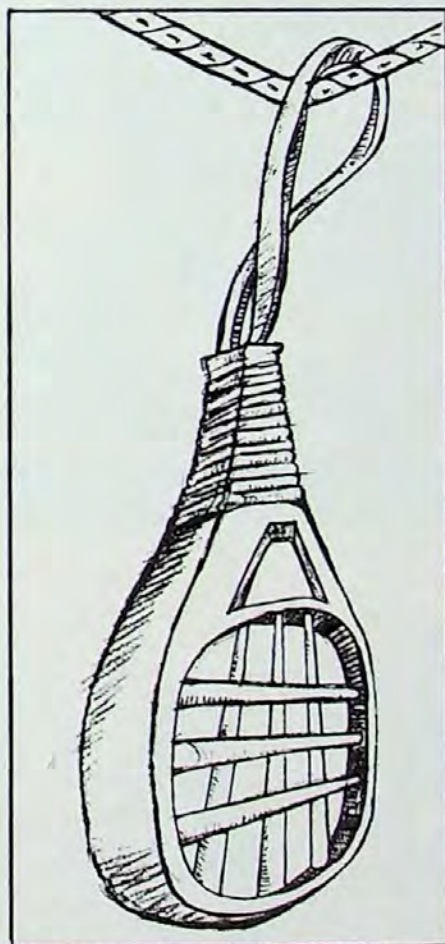
For more modest budgets Lampert will make racquetball earrings at \$250 and stick pins or tie tacks at \$100.

Out of town customers who contact Dennis Lampert will answer his questions about how and where they plan to wear the jewelry before the designer makes sketches for customer approval and creates the final work of jewelry art.

Jewels for the Pros

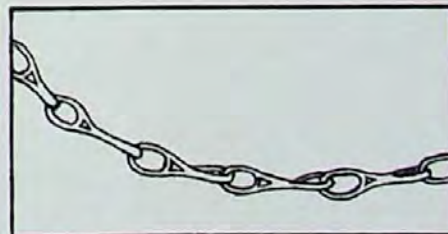
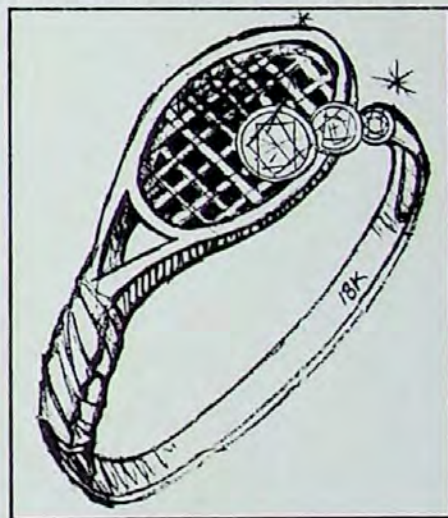


Sarah Green wears this one and one-half by half inch pendant with diamonds for strings and an emerald ball that Sports Illustrated Court Clubs commissioned Lampert to design for the pro after she won the sportsmanship award at the 1978 Nationals.



Steve Serot's Sports Illustrated Court Clubs sportsmanship pendant is an 18K gold stylized version of a racquet with dimensional strings on two levels. The wrist thong is woven together by hand out of gold wires.

Diamonds tapering in size and flowing from racquet to band give the look of a ball in motion in the ring Peggy Steding commissioned Lampert to design for her.



Interlocking 18K gold racquet links make up the Dennis Lampert bracelet that Pro Kathy Williams wears.

Who's Playing Racquetball?

Nora Lloyd: Fearless Museum Store Manager

She stands five feet two inches tall, weighs 96 pounds and her hair is a tousled mane. She has the daredevil instincts of a racing car driver and the stamina of a champion racehorse. No she is not Wonder Woman. Her name is Nora Lloyd.

At age 30 Nora Lloyd is already an international incident. She has lived in Mexico where she directed Televiscentro's version of "American Bandstand" and spent a year in France where she studied history and dove out of airplanes.

"Nora has no fear," reveals her husband, Bill Lloyd. "She has made more (parachute) jumps than a friend of mine who was a paratrooper in the Army."

Today, following a variety of work experiences, Nora is the manager of Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art store. And, according to co-workers at the Museum, her daredevil tendencies are still evident. It is not unusual to find Nora in the store precariously perched atop a rickety ladder, hanging a five pound bronze bell from the ceiling or a weighty tapestry from the top of a ten-foot high wall.

An avid sports enthusiast Lloyd started playing racquetball six years ago. "I wanted something faster and more challenging than tennis," she says. She plays early morning singles two or three times a week at Lake Shore Racquet Club with Bill and occasionally with Elizabeth Miller, a co-worker at the Museum. Miller describes Nora as "a delightful person and a vicious competitor," and Bill characterizes Nora's game as "gutsy. She hits shots that no earthly person should hit. Nora invites challenge."

This affinity for challenge is clearly reflected in her varied careers. Upon returning to this country from France at age 20 Nora accepted a job with Yardley of London. As Miss London Look she travelled to a different U.S. city each week to "soft sell" Yardley beauty products. She appeared on

radio and television talk shows, spoke in high schools, and presided over a weekly "beauty bash" attended by as many as 1,000 teenagers.

After one year Nora left Yardley to work first as a producer of radio and television commercials in Chicago, next as a television director in Mexico City, then as a producer of an educational TV show in Denver, and finally, just prior to returning to Chicago, as a writer for a television consulting firm in Cedar Rapids, IA.

In her spare time Nora delights in concocting extravagantly caloric gourmet dishes. "Although we usually eat simple, healthy meals, once a week I splurge and create a really special dinner," she explains.

Racquetball is an important outlet for this very dynamic lady. She claims: "It's a super way to start the day. It relieves tension and gets me in the right frame of mind to conquer the world."

—Judith Neisser



—Mary Cairns photo



—Patricia Kaser photo

Racquetball has replaced parachute jumping as a major diversion for Nora Lloyd, who's store manager at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. She's shown playing with her husband, Bill.

If you know a woman who plays racquetball and whose job or hobby would make her a good subject for this series, send her name, address and phone number to Carol Brusslan, National Racquetball, 4101 Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076.

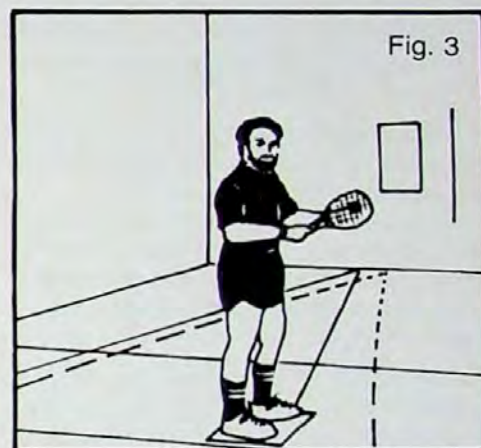
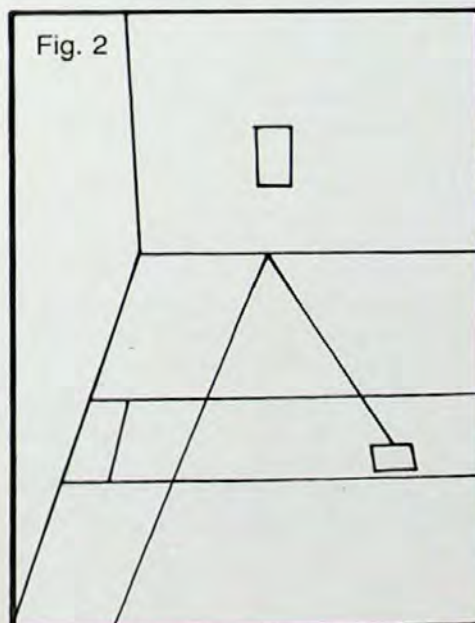
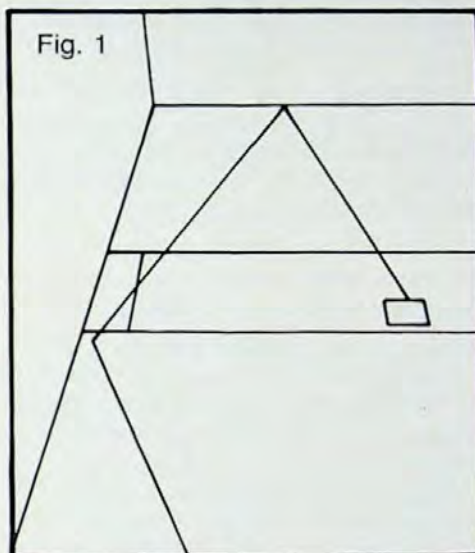
APRO Teaches . . . Teaching to Angle The Serve to The Backhand Corner

This article is part of *National Racquetball's* series by members of APRO, the American Professional Racquetball Association, which certifies and provides other benefits for racquetball pros. This month's author is Marc Auerbach, of Court Sports in Houston, TX.

It's amazing how many racquetball instructors have difficulty in simplifying the teaching of the serve to the backhand corner.

The most common error associated with the serve to the backhand corner is the ball hitting the front wall too far left of center, thusly striking the side wall too soon and angling to the center of the court. (Figure 1). When this happens, the server is placed in the worst possible court position. With the serve angling to the center of the court the server's forced to move out of the center court area, thus opening up the whole court. The other alternative is for the server to grit his teeth while watching the front wall and hope he doesn't get hit with the ball. Neither alternative is desirable.

Let's examine why the serve is so difficult to control. Very few instructors explain to a student that the length of one's arm plus the racquet has to be taken into consideration when formulating the proper angle to the corner. Figure 2 represents the conventional method of formulating the angle: standing in the center of the service box, looking at the three foot square in the corner of the court and hitting an imaginary area on the front wall. But failure to compensate for the racquet length throws the serve completely off target. This is represented by the dotted line in Figure 2.



The simplest way of teaching the angle is to divide the court in half with an imaginary line running down the center of the front wall. While standing in the center of the service box the student should aim the serve approximately one foot left of this center line (Figure 3). This system holds true for the drive serve as well as the soft serve.

REMEMBER: When teaching the serve (A) have your student take his or her time . . . many serves go astray because the shot has been rushed; (B) Allow for the added length of the racquet when formulating the angle. **ONLY WHEN YOUR STUDENT CAN CONTROL SERVES IS HE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE PROPER COURT POSITION FOR THE RETURN.** ●

Grasping the Ball With Your Eyes

It's Worth the Work to Improve Your Racquetball Vision

by James R. Gregg, O.D.

Playing racquetball is no doubt one of the most visually demanding things you do. Yet chances are you have given very little thought to your visual performance on the court.

No matter if you are the club champ or still trying to win your first game, there is undoubtedly room for improvement in how you use your eyes. Better visual skills can make you a winner.

No game requires more complex visual judgment of direction and velocity than racquetball with its five playing surfaces and the many bounce angles those surfaces produce. Besides that it takes a zip fast decision as to what kind of return to hit to get the angle you want.

Vision is the master control of it all. No matter how beautifully developed and coordinated your body muscles, you'd lose every game looking through a tube or with a hole in the center of your vision. But what kind of seeing does it take to guide racquet to the right place at the right time to meet the ball?

First of all you should have the finest visual acuity you can get. Your vision should be as close to 20-20 as possible. Nearsightedness and

astigmatism can blur vision and should be corrected. Glasses might be a nuisance on the court — hard to keep in place and easily broken. But there are ways to avoid that problem — contact lenses for one. See the article "Protecting Your Eyes For Your Next Racquetball Game" in the February, 1978, issue of *National Racquetball*.

Your game also benefits from wide side vision. If you have minor visual field defects, compensate for them by learning to move your eyes in ways described later in this story.

Even more important are dynamic visual skills that make the difference between experts and duffers.

Research has shown there is a correlation between superior athletic performance and these dynamic visual abilities such as good eye tracking, flexible focusing, accurate judgments of speed and direction and proper evaluations of changes in depth. Studies in baseball and basketball indicate that varsity players have higher quality dynamic visual skills than do junior varsity members, and both have better ones than non-participants in those sports.

Do Visual Skills Make the Champion, Or Is It the Other Way Around?

So does one make the varsity because he has superior visual skills (of course he must possess the physical qualities as well), or does he have them because they have been developed by playing sports a great deal, or have they been developed by specialized eye training? Good question. The answer pretty well determines whether there is any point in reading further. If you're stuck with the visual skills you've got, why bother? Actually dynamic visual skills can be improved by practice (within limits of inherited factors.) You can learn to make better use of what you have.

You didn't need to read this article to learn it is essential to *keep your eyes on the ball*. But there is a great deal more than just saying it. You probably

Keep Your Eyes on the Ball

An off-the-ceiling shot takes great eye contact to time just right for a smash because of the speed and downward angle.



James Gregg photos posed by Richard Kendall, O.D., president of the California Optometric Association, and his wife, Peggy.

have a lot to learn about how to do it. One of pro football's best pass receivers, Paul Warfield, said he never took his eyes off the ball until he could see the laces, and he didn't drop many. The point is to visually grasp the ball until you get all the necessary information about its speed and direction so you can hit it perfectly.

Try it in practice. Concentrate on keeping your eyes on the ball. Don't worry about making a return at first. Pick it up in central vision as soon as you can and look at it intently so you can make out its details. In reality you can't actually see details since it spins too much, but take the get-ready-attitude that you'll see it perfectly as though it were standing still.

Think: Watch the ball all the way to the racquet

Do it forehand, backhand and overhead. Volley with yourself and don't hit the ball very hard. All you are trying to do is develop the eye contact skill. If you have a partner to work at it with you, all the better. You'll need him or her later to practice other visual skills. Spend 15 minutes each time you play practicing "eyes on the ball." Like learning many other skills by enough repetition the conscious effort eventually becomes automatic.

Keeping your eyes on the ball depends upon delicate control of the six muscles that move each eye. Pursuit movements can be practiced in several ways. Tracking any moving objects as accurately as possible may help. Certain mechanical devices are sometimes used as part of a vision therapy program to improve eye movements. Your optometrist could lay out a program of visual exercises if it is found you need them.

Eye-grasping-ball technique is something you can practice on the court. Visual perception tells you if the ball has back-spin, top-spin, what its velocity is and more. Consciously try to judge all you can about ball action. Train the visual perceptual computer in your brain to provide a lightning fast readout about what's going on.



Be Aware of Court Position

With peripheral vision and visual awareness of where he is on the court this player has already picked out the spot where he wants his return to hit.

When actually playing a shot you should shift your attention from central vision (which is the keeping-eye-on-the-ball-system) to your peripheral visual field as soon as you safely can. That's *not* taking your eyes off the ball because if you do that too soon, you'll probably hit a bad shot. What it does mean is to develop a visual awareness of your position on the court, where your opponent is, and the spot you are going to place your return.

Central and peripheral vision must work neatly together. Even the admonition to keep your eye on the ball did not mean shut off the peripheral system. It's a matter of priorities. You zero in on the ball, then locate a target for it. The shift of concentration takes place in a fraction of a second. Expert players may well be making both judgments practically simultaneously.

Analyzing this process of visual performance on the court can help you improve it. *Think* peripheral awareness the instant you get your eye on the ball. Try it right now. Look at an object

across the room and without changing fixation, note other objects and where one is with respect to another. You'll do better with aggressive peripheral attention rather than not thinking peripheral awareness.

Practice that on the court. "Okay, the ball will reach me belt high, arm's length to the right. Now where am I? The short line is just in front of me. Where is my opponent so I can avoid a hinder and at the same time make a pass shot?" Your mental processes might be something like that or analyzing any of the other thousands of combinations of ball action, your position and opponent movements.

Think peripheral awareness next time you practice and play. Work at it. The first few times simply judge your position with respect to front and side walls, and the court lines. There is no secret way to do it, just do it better. All but an infinitesimal number of players have physical qualities to produce maximum width side vision. But making it function most effectively can depend upon lots of practice.

Riveting Doubly Important with Glass

The walls and ceiling surfaces of racquetball courts are generally the same color or close to it, except when there are glass walls for spectator viewing (and some of those are very difficult for orienting a player's position). When the side walls are glass, it is doubly important to rivet your eyes on the ball so you don't lose it in the background. Even contrast between wall and floor is not great. The court lines help some but only the service box line provides any clues to court edge and they are short. There is little to go on in judging court position. It's not like tennis with lines, net and fence to help in orientation. Therefore the racquetball player has to work hard at developing peripheral awareness.

Size up the court. Look at the surface of the wood floor. Build into your visual memory banks the texture of the wall surface, any difference in front and side

walls. Does the lighting produce shadow differences that might provide some clues? Anything else about the court that might be useful as landmark or target? Glass walls of some kinds actually help out if they do not go all of the way to the floor and thus create a line of sharp contrast.

Have you ever stepped on a court and had a strange feeling of disorientation? Did you have the feeling of a white-out? That can happen if the walls have been newly painted or cleaned. You'll find you can judge court position better when the walls are ballmarked. Leave 'em dirty? Paint on some light stripes? Stipple the surface? It makes visual sense.

The next step in sharpening your visual perception on the court is visualizing a target — the spot where you want the ball to hit a playing surface. The target should be specific, not just the general direction of the front, side walls or ceiling. Where should it go? Three feet from the left corner head high? Imagine a bulleyes a foot in diameter at the spot you want the ball to hit.

A Target in the Middle of the Ball

Taking that attitude about visualization is far different than volleying without consciously trying to do more than "make a good shot." Think vision and seeing and visual concentration. Grasp the ball visually as tight as you can as soon as appropriate after it leaves your opponent's racquet because its flight to the court will tell you something about its return. An instant later imagine a target you're going to hit right in the middle with the ball.

Should you try to track the ball with center vision right off your opponent's racquet? That depends upon where he or she is and where you are. If you are behind your opponent, yes. When your opponent is behind you, it is generally better not to track the ball with central vision. Most injuries to eyes from the ball occur when looking back as opponent hits the ball. So look away at such times to avoid injury — better yet wear protective devices all the time.

The ball travels past you so fast when hit from behind you, it is tough to follow with precise eye movements. You can get a lot of information about velocity and direction from peripheral vision, grasping the ball visually as it comes off a wall. Switch to central vision as soon as you can, and by all means zero in on the ball a few feet before the racquet reaches it.

One way to practice is to place some markers around the court. Use bright circles of paper. Different colors could be placed at the end, one-third of the way and two-thirds back to the back wall. While you are practicing keeping eyes on the ball, at the same time develop awareness of the court edge. That really tells you where you are on the court and makes it possible to train yourself to visualize a target for ball placement.

Try it. Place markers around where you feel they should be. You may want one in the corners at the floor. Play a game with a "friendly" opponent who doesn't mind your experiment. Practice peripheral awareness of the markers. At the same time your visual system is learning to get more meaning from the light and shadow of the walls themselves.

Size Up the Court

Contrast of wall and floor helps locate where you are on the court and you must know that to place a good corner shot.



Let Peripheral Vision Fill You In

A smash from your opponent's racquet travels too fast for you to follow precisely with your eyes. Notice how Dick Kendall's eyes already are directed toward where he expects it to go in order to pick it up quickly off the wall.



Keep Your Eyes Moving

Move eyes rather than head as much as possible as shown in this off the back wall return because they move faster and body is in better balance than when head is turned too much.



Let the Tracking System Go to Work

Follow your shot with your eyes so you know what your opponent will have to do so you can get ready for his probable return.

Moving from Markers to Walls Only

After you do it for awhile, don't rely on the markers alone but begin to use the walls only. Finally of course you remove the markers but visually imagine they are still there to tell you where you are on the court.

Now there is something else you can do with the markers. Try to hit them for practice. They can be placed in any location you like. Keep hitting shots to the markers, perhaps having someone serve to you. In fact you can practice serving that way, too. This method is often used with boxes or cans to practice ball placement. That's fine, but think of them as visual images that will still be there when you play a game.

There is still something else you should learn to visualize — your racquet. Try to imagine you can see its position. Does it meet the ball properly? Try "seeing" that. Now and then, while you practice, concentrate on watching your racquet hit the ball.

Sweeping eye movements can be used to pick the ball off your opponent's racquet. You jockey for position to get where you think you should be to return the shot your opponent will make. At the same time your head needs to be postured so you can see the ball come off his or her racquet as soon as possible, generally with peripheral vision.

When making this maneuver keep your eyes moving. Head movements are far less efficient.

Keep your eyes moving to pick up the ball so the tracking system can go to work to maintain eye contact. Try that the next time on the court. Consciously move your eyes as you get into position while your opponent begins to make a return. It will help you locate your position at the same time. You'll learn the right amount of eye movement. Too much will make it tough to locate the ball, but just enough can be a key factor in a winning shot.

There is another way to sharpen your visual skills besides practicing them yourself on the court. Some optometrists have developed visual training systems for athletes. Specialized practice methods in the office and at home can help. But you can do a lot for yourself to improve your visual performance if you really want to. ●

Just Enough Force For Ceiling Shot

by Terry Fancher

This article is from 40 Common Errors in Racquetball, and How to Correct Them by Terry Fancher and Arthur Shay, now on sale at pro shops and bookstores.



Mistake

Overswinging on ceiling shots

Overswinging—hitting harder than is necessary—often plagues the ceiling shot volley. This shot is extremely tiring if used excessively, easily doing more harm to the player than the good rest that comes from slowing down the game.



Correction

The ceiling shot should be struck with just enough force to carry the shot to the back wall after a bounce. This is just enough force to keep your opponent back where it's relatively hard for him to kill, and it forces him to continue making defensive returns.

When working out alone stand about three-quarters of the way back in the court and hit soft shots to the ceiling about three or four feet from where it meets the front wall. Determine the degree of force you need to get the ball back to the rear wall, and file the information for future use in your racquetball storehouse of knowledge. ●

The Center Court Strategy

by Steve Strandemo

From *The Racquetball Book* by Steve Strandemo with Bill Bruns. Copyright © 1977 by Steve Strandemo and Bill Bruns. Reprinted by permission of Pocket Books, a Simon & Schuster Division of Gulf & Western Corporation.

To win consistently in racquetball you must maintain a good center court position as much as possible throughout the match. This area — which extends from just behind the back service line to about nine feet from the back wall and to within two or three feet of both side walls — has always influenced good racquetball. Yet many players fail to realize that for experts, intermediates, and novices alike *whoever controls center court controls the rally*. You may not win the rally when you out-position your opponent — good strokes and proper execution are equally important — but the percentages will always be in your favor.

There are two basic reasons why the center court strategy encompasses every player in the game. First simple geometry dictates that any ball hit with reasonable velocity that strikes a side wall — either on its way to, or returning from, the front wall — will angle toward the middle of the court. Only a perfect or nearly perfect shot will go for an irretrievable “kill” in the front court, or an unreachable “pass” in the back court, against a well positioned opponent. And, secondly, *perfection is a low percentage proposition*. We either hit the ball too high on the front wall, or we catch a side wall. Even at the professional level most matches are played with both players continually jockeying for position in center court, because that's where the ball keeps coming. The speed of the ball allows minimal time to swing properly, and even the slightest error will angle the ball toward the middle.

Therefore, by learning to operate inside the center court area, you're always going to be close to the heart of the action — just one or two steps and a good stretch away from virtually every

ball your opponent hits that isn't killed in the front court. You greatly reduce wasted energy chasing down balls, and you give yourself the best chance to play the game offensively — the way it is intended.

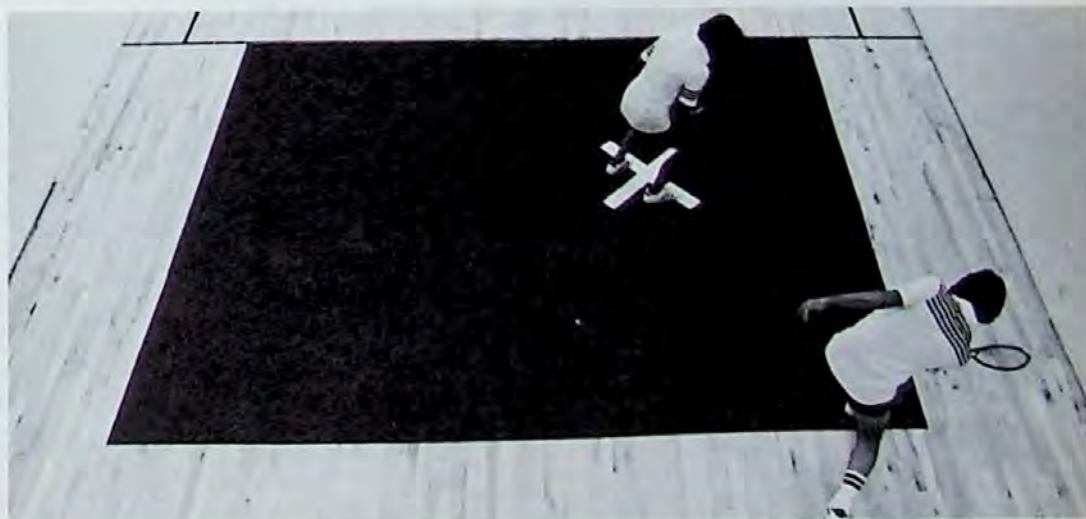
Beginners, don't get scared off. The center court strategy is easily understood and it will enable you to walk out on the court with the confidence that you already know where to position yourself — no matter how many walls the ball might carom off — and where you want to try to aim your own shots. Racquetball is a fast moving, rapid fire, quick reacting type of game that can thoroughly confuse the inexperienced player. It's hard to keep your bearings in the heat of play as the ball ricochets about the court while you try to anticipate where it's going to end up and what shot you should hit. But a knowledge of center court strategy gives you an anchoring point around which the entire game swirls; it enables you to see the forest and the trees.

Locating Your Center Court “X”

The center court area always remains the same size, but your ideal coverage position within this area will shift in relation to the ball, your opponent's position, and the accuracy of his or her shots. Thus your imaginary center court “X” will normally be located about three to five feet behind the back service line and about midway between the side walls, slightly to the side to which you have hit the ball. *Ideally, this will leave you equidistant from the crucial court zones that you must cover.*

In good racquetball “floating” your center court “X” to your opponent's side of the court will enable you to anticipate his kill attempt into the nearest front corner, or his passing shot down that side wall — his quickest and best scoring opportunities. If he tries to go cross court, the ball has to travel a longer distance and you gain an extra split second to cover the shot.

Conversely, if your opponent is unable to kill the ball into the front corners or drive it along the side wall, then you can move your “X” into the middle, and even toward the opposite side of the court, since most of his cross court shots are going to wind up there.



When your opponent has the ability to kill the ball into the front corner, or to hit down-the-wall passing shots, you must position yourself on that side of the court from which he or she is hitting.

When you play a person whose game emphasizes successful kill attempts into the front wall, then you'll want to shift your "X" forward two or three feet to give yourself a better chance to dig up as many of these shots as possible. Or, if your opponent likes to hit cross court passes with a lot of velocity, your "X" will probably float back two or three feet from its normal location, toward the side of the court the ball is coming to.

Most C, and even some B, players will find that this deeper position — about 27 to 29 feet from the front wall — can actually be effective against hard hitting opponents who are unable to keep the ball low on the front wall, and whose shots thus always take their second bounce in the deep back court, or even rebound hard off the back wall.

Jockeying For Center Court Position

You may be thinking: "If the center court is so crucial, why don't people just head for their 'X' after every shot and wait for the ball to come to them?"

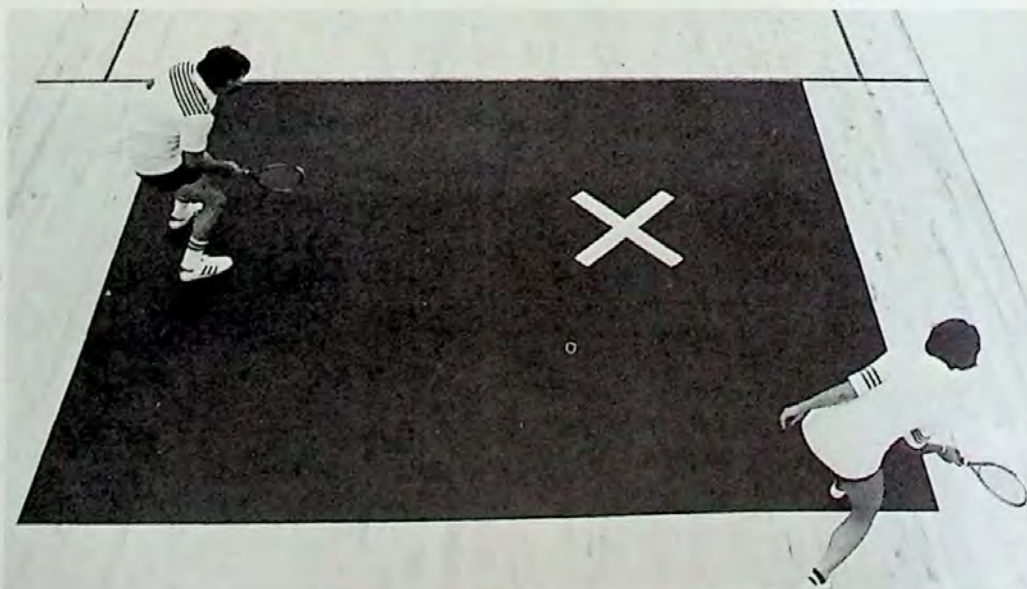
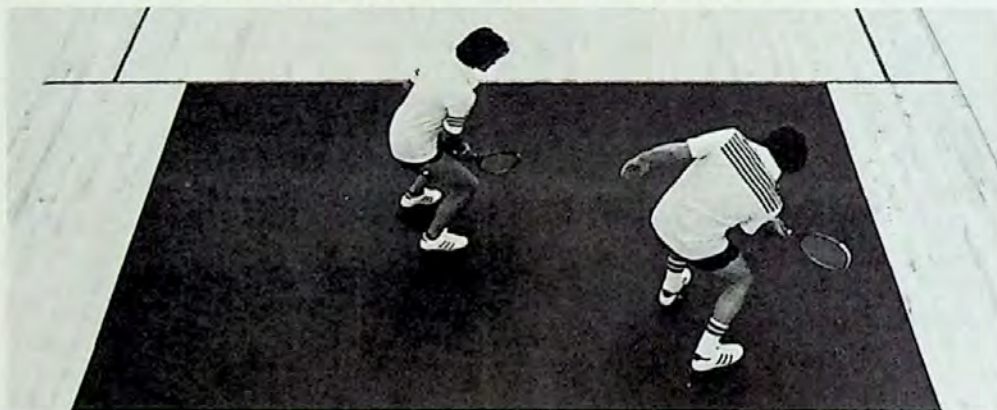
Theoretically that's what you want to do; you always want to be focused on the middle of center court. But keep in mind one basic fact: *nobody owns center court*. It's always up for grabs, depending upon who has the best anticipation and the quickest, most accurate strokes. Both players have the right to use that area, but only when they are entitled to it.

The rule of thumb is: When you hit the ball down the sides of the court, you can remain in center court or move into that area as your opponent retrieves your shot. But whenever you bring the ball into the middle, you're obligated to

move far enough to one side to allow your opponent sufficient room to swing properly and to have an open hitting lane to the front wall. This doesn't mean you have to vacate center court completely; you may only have to move two or three feet away, to the perimeter. Then once your opponent has hit, move right back toward the middle, unless his shot forces you elsewhere.

In good racquetball control of center court is rarely clear cut. Both players are in that area most of the match, three to five feet apart, jockeying for the *better* position — not so much in a physical, elbowing sense, but with the shots they hit. This puts the emphasis on key fundamentals that are applicable to players at every ability level as they maneuver for consistent center court positioning:

These players are jockeying for position in center court. They both are in good coverage and scoring positions, and the rally will probably be determined by who has the most efficient stroke in this area.



When play shifts to the left side of the court, shift your position accordingly, as the player in front is doing here. She anticipates the ball going into the left corner, or along the left wall, but she is ready to turn and cover her opponent's cross court pass.

The player on the left is in center court, but well away from where he should be positioned, as indicated by the white "X". He leaves his opponent a wide-open court on the right side.

- Whenever possible strive for kill shots into the front corners or straight into the front wall, or passing shots that drive your opponent to the perimeter of center court. Even if your opponent retrieves your passing shot, you now control the middle and he must try to drive you out with a difficult shot.

- Hit your passing shots low enough on the front wall (under three feet, assuming reasonable velocity) to keep them from rebounding off the back wall and giving your opponent an easier shot.

- If you're unsure of what to do, always aim to hit the front wall *first* — as low and as hard as possible — and you will keep good pressure on your opponent. Even if the ball heads straight for your opponent in center court, the velocity will force him to execute a quick "reflex" stroke, and it may even handcuff him enough to force an outright error.

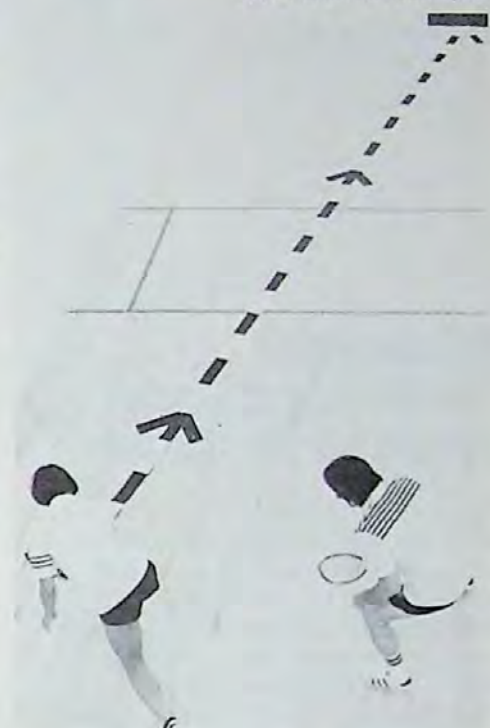
- Hold your position in center court by volleying every ball that comes to you in the air at *about waist level or below*. If you let these shots go by you, thinking you'll have an easier play when the ball rebounds off the back wall, then you're opting for defensive — and ultimately losing — racquetball. A smart opponent will simply take over center court control as you move back into the deep court area, and he'll be waiting for you to hit anything but a perfect shot off the back wall. (As I'll discuss later, when the ball is coming to you in the air above chest level, let it go by and it will rebound off the back wall into center court for an easy "plum shot.")

- Learn to think aggressively — and offensively. You're always looking for scoring opportunities, and when you get them, take them; don't hesitate and simply try to keep the ball in play. The average rally is not very long, and if you pass up an offensive opportunity, your opponent may end the rally before you get another chance. The style of play I advocate might seem, and look, a little wild and frenzied, but that's the way racquetball is. So get yourself to think: *"This is the way to play. I want to be obsessed by the center court."*

The player here has positioned himself too far forward during the rally — in the middle of the service zone — and thus leaves himself vulnerable to cross court passes.



When you position yourself too deep on the court, you have a difficult time retrieving your opponent's kill attempts.



Grooving Your Center Court Position

You want to visualize the heart of center court as your home base, a place where you feel comfortable, even if you have to share the area with your opponent. Following are some ways you can incorporate the center court position into your playing style so that it becomes instinctive:

1. Think of a magnet in the middle of center court that is always drawing you — as well as the ball — into that area. After virtually every shot you take, try to funnel toward the magnet and as close to your ideal position as possible. If your opponent is already there, then move in alongside as close as etiquette and good sense allow.
2. Find a friend who will play a match with an "X" taped directly in the middle of center court. This will give you a

specific visual reference — out of the corner of your eye — as you move about the court. You should also check yourself as you play and see how close you're positioning yourself to that "X".

3. Play several matches where you tell yourself: *"I'm going to learn what it really means to play center court. I'm going to stand right in the middle of this area without my opponent and force him to hit the ball away from me. I'll sacrifice some shots into the corners and down the side walls, but I'll take advantage of the percentages, since most balls are going to come to me in the middle."* This kind of extreme positioning may feel awkward and unnatural at first, especially if you're changing some ingrained coverage habits. But you're going to start winning more matches this way, and that should loosen you up nicely. ●



Racquetball

Midwest Amateur Leaders Meet in Chicago

On August 26 the USRA, in conjunction with the Illinois State Racquetball Association, conducted the first Midwestern Regional State Chairmen's Seminar. State chairmen from the central states representing 13,000 USRA/state affiliate members held an informal two hour discussion at the Downtown Court Club in Chicago.

The meeting was held during the annual S & S Insurance Agency open, a huge tournament that kicks off the season in Illinois. USRA sponsor representatives — Art Orloski representing Seamco Sporting Goods and Lee Steele representing Wilson Sporting Goods Co. — were on hand to answer the chairmen's questions about their companies and products. All chairmen in attendance received a free pair of the Wilson-Bata official racquetball shoes for testing purposes, as well as a plaque acknowledging each chairman's contribution to amateur racquetball.

Those chairmen in attendance included Len Sporman (Indiana State Racquetball Association), Dennis Wood (Michigan Racquetball Association), Bob Keenan (USRA Wisconsin Chapter), Doug Clark who happened to be in Chicago (New Jersey Racquetball Association) along with Dan Bertolucci and myself of the USRA. Topics for discussion ranged from news concerning a portable glass racquetball court to new instructional

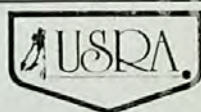


Terry Fancher

films to how to run better tournaments. We also discussed setting non-conflicting schedules for statewide and regional amateur events.

The regional meeting was designed to more closely align our independent state associations. We feel such meetings are more effective than a national convention would be. We are encouraging our various regions to arrange for similar meetings.

These seminars provide unity to the various racquetball areas of the country and reinforce our backing of the amateur state associations. The sharing of ideas and programs can be mutually beneficial to all amateur organizations involved.



Upcoming Events

Nov. 30 - Dec. 3

Annual Racquetball Turkey Shoot Tournament, Manhattan Athletic Club for Men, Inc., 3421 Sepulveda Blvd., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266, Susan Jones 213-545-6618 or Earle Castle 213-772-1650.



Meet Your State Chairman

Barbara Williams - Wyoming

If you're ever on Interstate 90 going West to Yellowstone, stop in and see Barbara Williams. Although Wyoming is not one of the more populated states in the country, racquetball does exist there and is beginning to flourish. One of the reasons for this trend is our USRA Wyoming chairperson, Barbara Williams. Being the program director for the Sheridan YMCA Barbara was ready to affiliate her state a year before our program ever began.

Besides organizing the Y's racquetball and handball tournaments Barbara is in charge of aquatics, rawhide basketball, and training volunteer leadership, and she coaches softball, soccer and floor hockey. She also supervises activities for all ages, ranging from preschoolers to senior citizens. "Last summer I taught racquetball basics to school children while the courts weren't full," she says. Having been a tennis player the transition to racquetball was easy once the three courts were added onto the "Y".

"Racquetball is a fast, exciting, challenging game, and around here it's easy to find a partner. It's so easy to learn and you can work at it as much as you want to progress," according to our only female state chairperson. Future plans for the "Y" include the addition of more courts. In fact racquetball courts and court clubs are being built throughout the state. The site for the 1978 USRA Wyoming Racquetball Championship was the new courthouse in Laramie. Other clubs or courts under construction are in Casper, Cody, Buffalo and Gillette.

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205-324-3431

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The great distance between cities does present a problem in Wyoming, "not in communications, but in greater participation in events and clinics," says Barbara. However a well traveled crew is now emerging. Right now the state association is somewhat loosely organized and relies on help from Byra Kite, who has been involved since the inception of racquetball in the state. He is the resource person in the southern part of the state to help Barbara in the north.

Outstanding players in Wyoming racquetball include a transplanted Hawaiian, young Winston Ho, who is the state champion this year, dethroning last year's champ, Charlie Jorgenson of Sheridan. Top rated women are Jan Nelson of Cheyenne, who was the 1978 winner, and Missy Mullinax of Sheridan who was runnerup.

"Despite the fact that the state program is in its infancy, the increasing number of courts is swelling our ranks. We have developed strong friendships among the players in the state and even exchange reciprocal memberships between clubs. There's an open invitation for a match to any players passing through just about any town with courts," says Barbara.

If you're ever going south to Denver or north to Billings, take a run through Sheridan and say hello to — or play a game with — our Wyoming chairman.



Who Will Your State's Most Improved Player Be ?

Setting foot on a racquetball court — perhaps for the first time this fall — are 50 players who will win *National Racquetball's* Most Improved Player awards next June.

The 50 players — one from each state, either men or women — will be those competitors whose skill and hard work during the coming months will make them move up the racquetball ladder.

Candidates for *National Racquetball's* First Annual Most Improved Player award will present evidence showing how they raised their levels of play between September of 1978 and June of 1979. Compilation details and an announcement of prizes will follow in future USRA Amateur sections of *National Racquetball*.

In the meantime save the information (scorecards, etc.) that might put you among *National Racquetball Magazine's* Most Improved Players for 1979.



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Racquetball club manager, three years previous experience, willing to relocate. Write: Manager, P.O. Box 23166, Milwaukee, WI 53224.

The Tournament Experience

by Robert J. Van Tuyle

Bob Van Tuyle



—Steve Shay photo

It begins, perhaps when you put your name on the signup sheet at the club or write down your particulars on the entry blank. There is emotion in this experience. Initially it takes a certain amount of courage simply to enter, but now that your name is on the line other feelings prevail.

There's panic over an imagined pair of donuts served without coffee by some up and coming rookie, the frustration of hitting 300 backhand kills only to develop "skip-itis" in your practice games, the anticipation as you drift to sleep catching glimpses of a gigantic trophy being presented to you on the glass court. Strange things happen at tournament time.

A wife whose husband dragged her kicking and screaming into the courts for her first lesson now badgers him endlessly. "How am I going to win this tournament if you don't practice with

me." A husband who is chronically late for work from oversleep is up an hour early to "hit the bricks", getting in shape for that burst of energy at 10-10 in the tie-breaker. A 12-year-old turns off *Baretta* to prowls the courts looking for someone — anyone — to hit with.

Then there's practice, the forgotten part of the tournament experience. Those who make it appear easy on the court are not getting by on natural ability. They use a magic word, magic but not secret. PRACTICE. You prepare yourself. You run, skip rope, practice alone, find the big guns and practice with them. Forehands, backhands, footwork. You reread all those instructionals, do interval training, monitor your heart rate, read up on nutrition, then you run some more. And when you've reached your limit the theme from *Rocky* beats in your head, and you run some more (maybe only ten yards, but it's very dramatic . . . and satisfying).

Facing the Big B

Tournament day you're excited. It makes no difference what skill, sex or age division you play in. The competition is relative, the exhilaration of a challenge accepted is the same. You arrive at the club and check in (only extra large shirts left. Oh well use it for a nightie.) You check the draw sheet. (Edgar Brumfield is your first opponent. What's in a name?) You repair to the locker room.

The locker room is probably the best part of the tournament experience. Ah, well, let's put it this way. If you've played tournaments before, you'll see familiar faces, greet old friends. If you're a rookie, you'll soon be shaking hands and exchanging names with everyone around. (Humm. Edgar's got a LEACH bag . . . with his NAME on it!) A tournament is a racquetball convention, a great place to meet people and share common interests, to find new players, perhaps better than yourself, to play with and improve your game. The locker room is a neutral ground where pretensions are stripped away. It's a place where games are replayed (and "If only I'da . . ." is off heard.), it's a place to get tips on how to play your next opponent, to find out who's playing how well and a fine place to get someone to buy you a beer after a tough match.

As you dress, flights of migrating Monarchs fill your stomach. You prepare, drift into your T.M. or yoga or was it the Zen of racquetball. Your match is called, you take a few deep

breaths and bend to enter the court. You warm up trying not to watch Edgar roll every shot he takes. (Everyone looks good in practice. You just won't leave the ball a foot off the side wall and three inches high.) The ref tosses the coin, you call heads . . . it's tails.

Despite your trepidation you blitz Edgar. As you head for the locker room, you compliment him on his great forehand. "We'll have to play sometime," he says. "Sure," you say sincerely. You shower and head for the hospitality. (Yum, yum Italian U-Boats) Edgar does the same and waits for his consolation match. You ref a match, no sweat, check out the competition, look at your name, now one step closer to the finals, on the draw. You run into Edgar (seems he's everywhere) and as you talk, you find you both dated the same girl in college and she married a football player. (If she could only see you now.) You wait for your next match. It seems you've played this fellow before and lost in three close games. He'll be surprised when he sees how much you've improved. The theme from *Rocky* wells again. . .

Your All

As the scene fades, who knows? The tournament experience takes many twists. Even if you don't play well or the ref can't see or your opponent hits 17 cracks in a row, you learn about yourself. You learn how you function under pressure, how to win graciously and to lose with style. For 40 or 50 minutes there is only one important thing, not necessarily winning,

although that is the ultimate end, but playing, giving yourself to the game totally. You forget everything outside the 20 x 40 box. You summon up all the physical and mental ability you have. And you go for it.

If you win, fantastic. You bask in the glow of adrenalin.

You babble on to anyone who'll listen (and many will) about the key pass shot at 15 all. You walk around giving thumbs up to those who ask, "Ja win?" If you lose . . . life goes on, back to the drawing board, wait'll next time. You did your best, your body is in better shape for it and with a little luck you're a little better player. Could be someone will buy you a short beer and you can tell them about the freak pass shot at 15 all. Win or lose *Rocky* fades to the Bee Gees' *Stayin' Alive*. Maybe you'll turn into John Travolta at the tournament disco party.

A weekend of racquetball can invade your brain and leave you flailing at forehands in your sleep. The tournament tests you, let's you know exactly where your game is at. It gives you an incentive to work and keep in shape. It provides opportunities to learn and improve your game, your body and your spirit. Best of all you'll have a chance to have fun and to make a few friends among some of the finest people in sports — racquetball players. That is what this tournament experience is all about.



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Tournament Results

Reporters, take note: Help make our typesetter happy by sending us your tournament results typed double or triple (preferred) space with one-inch margins all around. Thank you.

Missouri

Minsky's Pizza of Kansas City stimulated tournament play during the 1977-78 season by sponsoring four open racquetball competitions at the Johnson County YMCA, Prairie Village, and the Indian Creek Racquet Club, Overland Park.

The tournaments drew players from Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Iowa and Nebraska.

In the first Women's Open Dec. 12-14 Teresa Brown beat Chrys Cox in the Open division. Carol Bolton defeated Linda Phebus in the B's. Lori Straub won over Cheri Parr in the C division and Sharon Drysdale captured the novice crown in a victory over Ruth Mueller.

Women's Open II April 14-16 saw Brown repeat her win over Cox, but Phebus won this second tournament by beating Nora Flack. Kathy McElwee also beat Flack to take first in the C division. Among the 32 novices who competed Linda Saldana emerged the victor, beating Elaine Schreiber in the finals.

Ron York defeated Bo Champagne in the Open division of Minsky's Mid America Men's Open Racquetball Tournament Jan. 12-15. Ed Brewer defeated Art Marolis to take first in the B division. C champ was John Orozco over Jeff Simpson, and Don Charpentier beat Vic Dyck to become

Senior division victor. Larry Goldstein topped Sheldon Epstein to take the Masters title, while Bill Parodi, Jr., won the Juniors over Scott Wicks.

Midwest Regional Champion Phil Stepp was Men's Open winner, over Champagne, in Minsky's Second Annual Kansas City Open May 4-7. Brown Lengthened her string of Open wins over Cox. In the B's Earl Jameson won the Men's division by defeating Reg Lyerla, and Naomi Usted beat Joni Lund to win the Women's title. Randy Rose was Men's C winner over Pat Valdapena. Dyck defeated Dr. Lee Humphrey in the Seniors. J.D. Fredericks beat Epstein in the Masters and John Gerson won over Tim Wesley in the Juniors.

Ohio

Eight of the top 10 racquetball players in Ohio open play shot it out for top honors Aug. 4-6 in the first annual Summer Sizzler Tournament at the Racquetball Emporium in North Canton. The tournament included 114 players from a three state area with the heaviest hitters coming from Mansfield, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Findlay, Detroit and Chicago.

Two-time State Singles Champion Clark Pittman defeated a determined Dan Clifford in Men's Open Singles. In neither of the finals games could Clifford quite overcome Pittman's very strong early leads.

Quarters: Pittman d. Tom Travers 21-16, 21-18; Jerry Davis d. Ed Reinhart 21-4, 21-6; Kevin Deighan d. Larry Morgan 21-12, 21-8; Clifford d. Rob Abrams 21-6, 21-16.

Semis: Pittman d. Davis 21-8, 21-12; Clifford d. Deighan 21-18, 21-11.

Finals: Pittman d. Clifford 21-18, 21-16.

Two-time State Doubles Champions Jerry Davis and Jack Soble defeated the current State Doubles Champions Rob Abrams (a former State Singles Champion) and Dan Clifford in Men's Open Doubles.

Quarters: Abrams/Clifford d. Tom Moore/Reinhart 21-11, 21-6; Morgan/Pittman d. Leland Van Trease/Jim Marsh 21-15, 21-7; Jeff Riehl/Clyde Senters d. Jack LeClerc/Steve Carson 21-15, 21-13; Soble/Davis d. Mike Stern/Joe Agulia 21-14, 20-21, 11-3.

Semis: Abrams/Clifford d. Morgan/Pittman 21-15, 21-11; Soble/Davis d. Riehl/Senters 9-21, 21-10, 11-7.

Finals: Soble/Davis d. Abrams/Clifford 21-20, 21-18

Trish Morpew defeated two former State Singles Champions, Bobbie Bricker and Cookie Wachtel to take the Womens Open Singles.

Barb Bordner and Wachtel teamed up to top Bricker and Morpew in Womens Open Doubles.

Women's B Singles: Linda Shalkhauser over Patty Nemeth 21-17, 21-9.

Women's B Doubles: Linda Shalkhauser/Patty Nemeth d. Linda Allen/Micki Lavis 21-20, 21-20

Men's Senior Singles: Soble over Jim Herron 21-7, 21-7

Men's Senior Doubles: Em Ferrara/Frog Wachtel d. Ron Akins/Brownie Van Trease 21-18, 19-21, 11-10

Men's B Singles: Greg Amaddio d. Bert Engel 8-21, 21-15, 11-6

Men's B Doubles: Joe Taggard/Jim Jankura d. Jim Damicone/Tom Roubal

Illinois

Ninety-eight members of the seven club Court House group competed in the Vittert Sports/Court House Invitational at the Schaumburg Court House July 15-16.

The tournament, under the direction of Bill Hoffman, Court House general manager, Jeff Oslande, manager of the club, and Jacque Jost, club pro, with an assist from Jan Frisch, proved to be a "highly successful event," according to Hoffman. "We were pleased with the mid-summer turnout. As usual the competition was tough in all divisions."

Competition covered three divisions — Open, B and C for both men and women, including a championship round as well as a consolation bracket. In the Men's A Ron Paul defeated Irv Kenefsky in a pair of 21-16 games. The Men's B was taken by Terry Marker, who defeated Ron Johnson 21-14, 21-5. Dave Negrete defeated Dick Packman 21-8, 21-19 to walk off court five with the C division championship.

In the Women's division Linda Schwartz defeated Renee Coplan 21-16, 21-7, for the A title. The Women's B event was all Oak Park as Joan Pearce defeated Mary Andrews 21-5, 19-21, 11-4, in the only tie-breaker match in the championship bracket. The C title was captured by another Oak Parker, Kathy Niles, 21-16, 21-17, when she defeated Gini Packman.

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Illinois

After the smoke cleared, top seed Pat Humphrey took top honors in class A beating out number two seed Kenric Sanders 21-13, 21-15 in the Quincy YMCA Seventh Annual Mark A. Penick Double Elimination tournament. Humphrey went through six players to gain the crown. He lost only one game to Sanders in first meeting in the quarter finals of the Double Elimination, but won the match 21-20, 19-21, 11-6. Mike Nobis, last year's B champ, took third in the A's beating Paul Burner.

Woody Boynton took the B division with a come from behind win over Dave Montgomery. A 17-year-old, Kevin Lohmeyer, took third place over veteran player Derv Garrison. Kevin promises to be a real fine prospect in the future.

In the C division 34 players were entered. A college man, Brad Wimmer, came out on top with a 21-8, 21-14 win over number two seed Jack McDougall. Another collegiate, John Heusler, took third place with an 8 and 7 over Jim Peters.

In Women's Open top seed Barb Baker took top honors for the third straight year. She bested JoAnn Paley 21-4, 21-7. Baker also entered the C division and won two matches before losing. She's hoping to make it to the next Pro-Am tourney. Says Baker, "I would like to enter just to gain some more experience playing top players." Cheryl Baum beat Gail Hoffman for third place in a hot contest 21-16, 13-21, 11-10.

In the Women's Novice Gail Hoffman took top honors with a 21-15, 21-18 win over Susan Bland. Marsha Narup took third, defeating Barb Hicks 21-13, 21-11.

California

The weekend of August 24-27 saw over 260 players competing in King's Second Annual Joust for the Bank of Newport Cup. This event sponsored by the Bank of Newport, Century 21, Irvine and Associates, and AMF Voit saw the likes of such pros as Rich Wagner, Jerry Hilecher, Lindsay Myers, Mike Yellen, Ben Koltun, Mark Morrow, Karin Walton and Marci Greer competing for \$2,000 worth of prize money in the open events. Besides the open events, which included singles for men and women, there was also a Men's Open Doubles draw which provided a lot of exciting action.

The action in the 16 amateur events, which got underway Thursday night, provided a few surprise winners and also contained a few top seeds who went all the way as expected. Two national champs, who won their divisions were Bud Muehleisen in Senior Singles defeating Price Thomas and Burt Morrow beating Bill Brierty in the Golden Masters.

The open events provided much of the action as top seeds Ben Koltun and Mike Yellen were defeated in the earlier rounds by Lindsay Myers and Rich Wagner. Lindsay then lost to Jerry Hilecher in the semi's, thus setting up a finals match between Wagner and Hilecher. Jerry, after playing a great opening game, tired from his previous match in Men's Open Doubles in which he emerged victorious, teaming with John Davidson of Kings to defeat Bill Hildebrand and Brian Cloud, and saw Rich Wagner take the last two games and the match to win the Bank of Newport Cup and \$1,000 first prize.

Karin Walton as the top seed in the Women's Open was tested in her finals match against Marci Greer and finally pulled it out in the tie-breaker by a score of 11-6. Thus she won her Bank of Newport Cup and the \$150 for first prize. Earlier in the day Karin had defeated Laura Martino and Marci bested Diane Heims in semi-final matches to set up their confrontation in the finals on Kings Royal Court.

Results

Men's Open: Rich Wagner d. Jerry Hilecher

Women's Open: Karin Walton d. Marci Greer

Men's Open Doubles: Jerry Hilecher/John Davidson d. Bill Hildebrand/Brian Cloud

Men's A: Carl Buggs d. Dave Bush

Men's B: Jim Hicks d. Steve Mitchell

Men's C: Marc Kaplan d. Terry Kressel

Men's Novice: Brian Sideritis d. David Baca

Men's Beginning Novice: Ron Garcia d. Kent Karnes

Seniors: Bud Muehleisen d. Price Thomas

Masters: Duane Cain d. Vance Lerner

Golden Masters: Burt Morrow d. Bill Brierty

Women's B: Irene Dolan d. Janell Raulins

Women's C: Janet Preleyko d. Lori Mullen

Women's Novice: Nancy Barreras d. Diana Kaylor

Women's Beginning Novice: Lynda Breithaupt d. Michelle Garland

Juniors: Jim Flannery d. Steve Lerner

Men's B Doubles: Gross Olson d. Hohl Mitchell

Men's C Doubles: Perkins/Lopes d. Durant/Brunk

Upper Mixed Doubles: Walton/Wendel d. Levin/Heims

Lower Mixed Doubles: Rodriguez/Raulins d. Raul/Garcia

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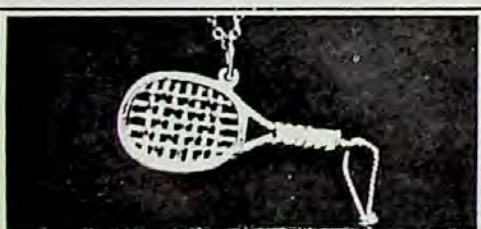
*Montclair, California; Fresno, California; Tucson, Arizona; Monroeville, Pennsylvania; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Laguna Niguel, California; Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Indiana

Over 225 entrants participated in the Indiana State Singles Racquetball Tournament June 2-4 at the Greenbriar Racquetball Club in Indianapolis.

The Men's Open division final was an exciting three game match between defending two time state champion and number one seed, Ron Johnson and the southeast Regional USRA Champion and former Indiana State Singles runnerup, Tamas Kutas. The first game went to Johnson 21-19 with a come-from-behind five point run from 16-19. The second and third games, 21-13 and 11-2, however, dashed the hopes of the two time state champ for a third consecutive title. The smooth control, almost errorless execution and accurate kills kept Ron on the move and on the floor most of the time. The reign of the geriatric gymnast in Indiana is over. In the third place match unseeded John Leane convincingly defeated last year's state runnerup and Intercollegiate Singles Champion Hal Broderson 21-17, 21-5.

In the Women's Open division a strong and consistent ceiling game mixed with crisp passing shots and occasional kills by Pat Foltz overcame Jane Pritchett 21-13, 21-15. Mary Visser took third place.



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A large Men's B division brought forth some hard fought and exciting matches. Don Davis the number eight seed, defeated number one seed, Marc Boulais, 16-21, 21-8, 11-8. Don's steady performance and deadly forehand overcame the blood and guts, hard hitting style of Boulais. Mike Snyder defeated John Isenbarger 21-13, 21-11 for third.

An even larger Men's C division exemplified the dramatic growth of racquetball in Indiana in the last two to three years. Bud Wade outlasted Dick Frye 17-21, 21-16, 11-1 in an exhaustingly long match laced with super retrieves and very few kill shots. Bob Fisher easily overcame Mike Mickalak, 21-13, 21-11 for third place.

The Men's Senior division was quite strong with several former Open players entering the seniors after reaching the magic age. In the finals, Harold Huff beat Chuck Solomon, 12-21, 21-8, 11-2. In one of the finest matches of the tournament Rex Lawler edged Al McClure 20-21, 21-19, 11-8 for third place. Al was the number three Open player last year, attesting to the strength of this division.

The old master, Earl Dixon, took the Masters division over Pierre Miller 21-15, 20-21, 11-6. The match was a contrast in styles with Dixon's driving pass shots and remarkable court coverage, overshadowing the deadly forehand side wall, front wall pinches of Miller. In the third place match Leo Cox defeated Karl Schmidt by forfeit.

In the very strong Women's B division Julia Marshall defeated Pam Hofer 4-21, 21-12, 11-3. Julia's consistent all around control game yielded to Pam's hard hitting style in the first game, but prevailed in the following games. Brigitte Huff defeated Kathy Berg 21-13, 21-20 for third place.

Our Junior divisions were held for the first time this year and remarkable racquetball skills were exhibited by the youngsters.

In the Boys 17 and Under division round robin Jack Eckman, dominated play and earned the first place trophy. Dan Moore took second while Erich Rigby placed third.

John Amatulli easily outclassed the field in the Boys 14 and Under division, with a classy show of racquetball prowess. Kerry Moore placed second and Mark Lasbury placed third.

In the Girls 14 and Under division Kathy Andrews placed first in the round robin while Dina Pritchett took second and Renee Solomon came in third.

Local news media, including TV, covered the Men's and Women's Open finals.

One of the most important accomplishment at the tournament was the formation of a new USRA affiliated State Racquetball Association. A complete slate of officers was elected by representatives from all over the State. We hope this will bring organization and direction to the rapidly growing sport of racquetball in Indiana.

— Ron Johnson

Results

Men's Open: 1st Kutas, 2nd Ron Johnson, 3rd John Leane, 4th Hal Broderson.

Women's Open: 1st Foltz, 2nd Jane Pritchett, 3rd Mary Visser, 4th Cathy Nerneth.

Men's B: 1st Don Davis, 2nd Marc Boulais, 3rd Mike Snyder, 4th John Isenbarger.

Women's B: 1st Julia Marshall, 2nd Pam Hofer, 3rd Brigitte Huff, 4th Kathy Berg.

Men's C: 1st Bud Wade, 2nd Dick Frye, 3rd Bob Fisher, 4th Mike Michalak.

Men's Senior: 1st Harold Huff, 2nd Chuck Solomon, 3rd Rex Lawler, 4th Al McClure.

Men's Masters: 1st Earl Dixon, 2nd Pierre Miller, 3rd Leo Cox, 4th Karl Schmidt.

Boys 17 and Under: 1st Jack Eckman, 2nd Dan Moore, 3rd Erich Rigby, 4th Brian Cushing.

Boys 14 and Under: 1st John Amatulli, 2nd Kerry Moore, 3rd Mark Lasbury, 4th Wes Marshall.

Girls 14 and Under: 1st Kathy Andrews, 2nd Dina Pritchett, 3rd Renee Solomon, 4th Lisa Solomon.

Vermont

The Green Mountain Racquetball Association held its second annual Vermont State Championships at The Court Club and Physical Fitness Center in Burlington last January. The tournament was a tremendous success with an increase to 158 participants over last year's 87, an indication of the growth that racquetball is enjoying in Vermont.

The Open division final pitted defending champion Paul Lazure against Jim Reuschel. In the first game Lazure held the edge and looked like he wasn't going to be beaten that weekend. But Reuschel turned the tables and won the second game by an equally convincing margin. He went on to win the third convincingly. The scores: 9-21, 21-10, and 11-1.

The large B field was finally narrowed down to South Burlington's Gary Farrell against Swanton's Cliff Bushey, who plays out of the Racquet's Edge in Essex Junction. The exciting three game match was as the crowd expected with both men using their speed and hustle to overpower the opponent. Farrell took the first 21-13. But Bushey "took to the air" and came back to win the next two 21-10 and 11-4.

The men's C title went to John Brown, Jr. with his win over Carl Jeppeson, while Men's Novice went to Ron Deal who defeated Jim Coleman.

The only player successful in defending last year's title was Mary Dee, winner of the Women's Open. To do so she had to defeat Karen Bednarski, who is one of the top female players in New England.

In the other two women's divisions it took the eventual winners three games in each of their final matches to go home the winner. Beth Allen defeated Nancy Beaudoin to win the women's Novice division, while Janet Johnson moved herself into this year's Women's Open division by beating Christen Copp in a close match 18-21, 21-20, and 11-8.

Bob "Fog" Pattison proved once again that when his game is on, he can be unstoppable. Combining superb shooting with hustle and some unbelievable gets he teamed with Paul Lazure to win the Open Doubles crown over Jim Reuschel and Mike Gamache.

In the B Doubles final home town favorites Dave Bourneuf and Mark Belisle defeated Mike Burke and Glen Ambusk.

— Mike Gamache

New York

Mike McDonough and Donna Meeger, captured top honors in the Champion Products Rochester Invitational Racquetball Tournament June 30-July 2.

Twenty-four of the top ranking men and 12 of the best women performers in the eastern United States and Canada participated in the round robin event held at the Winton Racquetball Club.

McDonough, a teaching pro who has been playing racquetball for only 18 months, defeated Leo Marsocci 21-14, 21-7 in the finals.

McDonough had to go to the tie-breaker in the semi-finals to defeat Jim Sheyer 21-14, 14-21, 11-8. Marsocci reached the finals by downing Jim Winterton 21-13, 21-15.

Manny Gregorio and Brian Valin, ranked fourth and fifth respectively in Canada, finished fifth and sixth in the tournament.

Meeger, a teaching pro, completely dominated the Women's division. No one scored more than 10 points against her. She defeated Carol Malikow, 21-10, 21-18 to earn the title. Kathy Witzig defeated Barb Grant to capture third place.

Doug Reighley, president of the Upstate New York Racquetball Association, was tournament director.

New York

The Independent Racquetball Players' Association in conjunction with SUNY Binghamton hosted the Annual Southern Tier Racquetball Classic on April 15.

In the Men's Open quarter-finals the pressure was on as Leo Marsocci faced Jim Dollinger and Artie Demar opposed Jim Winterton. The semi's found Marsocci and Demar face to face for first place and the \$400 purse. After a nerve racking, suspenseful two games, Demar and Marsocci split. Midway in the 11 point tie-breaker, Marsocci had Demar 6-1. Standing in the service zone Marsocci bellowed, "Don't let him lose, beat him!" He eyed Demar and set up for the serve - to Demar's deadly right hand. In a split second Demar's return rolled out of the front wall, unable to be recovered by Marsocci. Demar slowly took his position in the service zone. He was behind by five points and seemingly at a psychological disadvantage. He served half lobs and Zs to Marsocci. To the amazement of the crowd, Marsocci — and probably Demar himself — he ran 10 straight points to win the tie-breaker and the match.

Jim Winterton took Jim Dollinger to two games and a tie-breaker for third. The scores were 21-19, 20-21, 11-10. After his win Winterton dropped to his knees and with his hands raised in the air and his head thrown back he hollered,

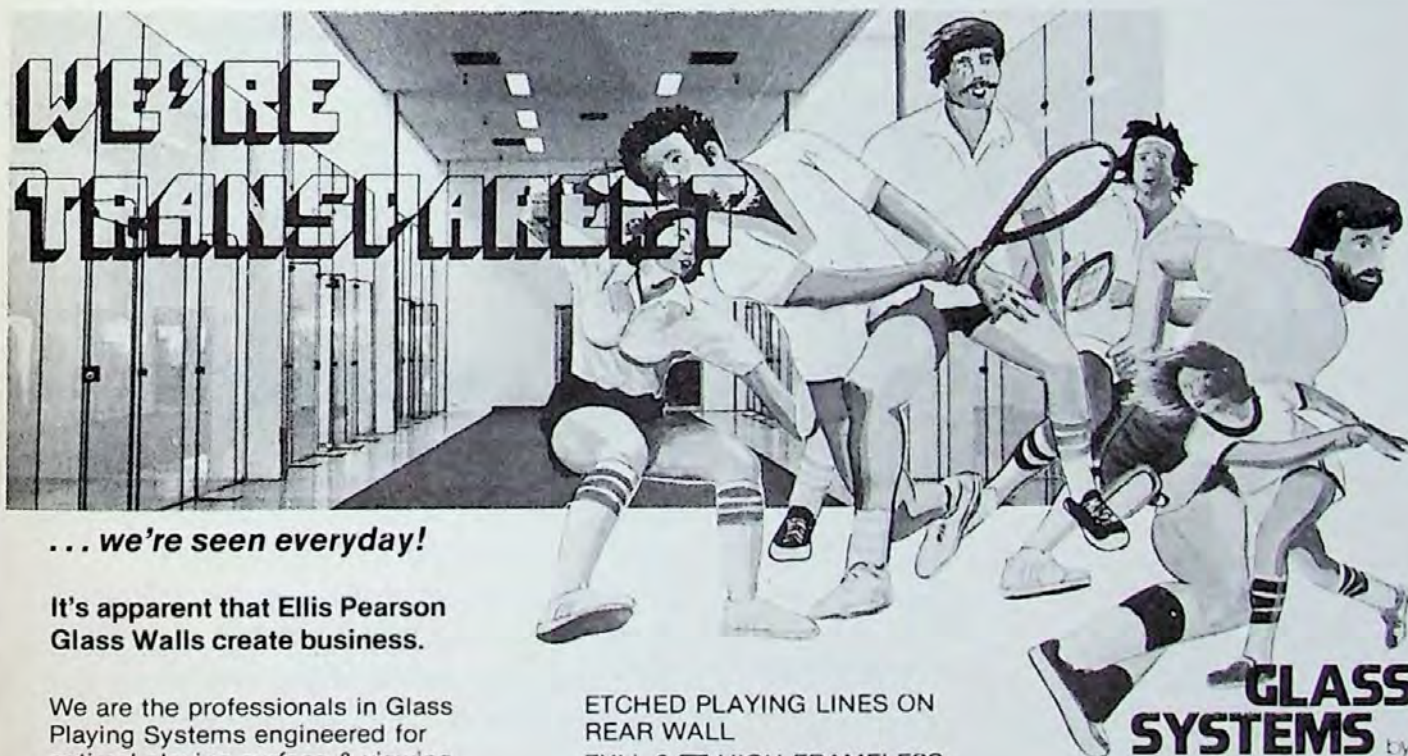
"You could have had it!" Nevertheless he was pleased to chalk up a dramatic win over Dollinger.

Donna Meeger won the Women's Open in her usual style of grace, form and strategy. The grueling round robin featured Jean Schuler, Donna Lahti and Cira Nickerson. Cira Nickerson, a newcomer to racquetball (but a former tennis buff), edged out Donna Lahti, the '77 Upstate Women's Champ, for second. Lahti took third. First place netted Meeger \$150.

Ashley won the Men's B over Dan Babuka in a tense, long, hot three game match; Roberta Pollack was victorious in the Women's B, placing first over Mary Lynch, who took second and Elaine Cook who took third; Burt Corcoran, a strong player with a good kill shot and an incredible ability to dominate the court, easily won the Men's C with Steven Freeh taking second and Mike Jones third, and Elena Mildenberger swept first place from Fran Goldberg second and Louise Aldridge third in the Women's C.

In the quarter finals of the Men's Seniors Dick Roche had an easy victory over Ned Deuel. Joe Spollen defeated Ed Burns. The semi's found Roche and Spollen running neck and neck for first. After a two game split Spollen shut out Roche in the tie-breaker 11-0.

The semi's of the Men's Doubles was a most interesting match as Dick Roche and Paul Smey



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faced the deadly duo, Jim Dollinger and John Moshides. After winning a grueling tie-breaker in the quarters Roche and Smey strained to keep pace with the explosive Dollinger/Moshides team. After dropping the first game of the semi's, Roche and Smey almost made a comeback in the second game. Eventually they succumbed losing 21-17.

Mary Lynch teamed up with Roberta Pollack to take the Women's Doubles over Elaine Cook and Jean Schuler.

Up and Coming Racquetballers to Watch: CIRA NICKERSON, ROBERTA POLLACK, LOUISE ALDRIDGE, DEBBIE DERLETH, JEAN SCHULER, ELAINE COOK, DAN BABUKA, STEVEN FREEH, ERIC HARDY, MIKE ARMSTRONG, JOHN MOSHIDES, AL LEWIS.

New York

The DeWitt Clubhouse, in operation for seven months, was the showcase for the Central New York/USRA Open Championship July 14-16. It was the Salt City's introduction to quality racquetball play. Forty club members competed in a solid field of 136 entrants, 32 women and 104 men in seven divisions, with Leo Marsocci and Carol Malikow gaining top honors in the Men's and Women's Open, respectively.

The Clubhouse's glass courts provided viewing for the over 400 spectators and standing room only greeted the finalists in both the men's and women's divisions.

Deb Schenk from Iowa was the furthest entrant and all points within New York were well represented. Tournament Directors Carol Malikow and Bruce Clark and Club Manager Dexter Beals and his staff executed a well run and respected tournament for all of central New York to see.

The Women's C division saw new tournament talent emerging from the Albany area. Janet Moppert scored a come from behind victory in the second game to beat Nancy Robbins 21-15 and 21-18.

Lori Nave in the Women's B upset Ida Hardy in the semi-finals to go against Barb Grant, who went on to win the Women's B division.

The Women's Open saw a similar upset in the semi-finals with Barbara Cornwall defeating Canadian Regional Winner Gretchen Ackerman. A full gallery watched Malikow come from behind with great determination and poise to defeat Cornwall, 19-21, 21-17, and 11-9.

Sixteen-year-old Gus Koumarelas entered his first USRA tournament and won the Men's C, beating Craig Dengler with scores of 21-14 and 21-10. Gus also entered the Men's B but ran into Doug Radz in the semi-finals. Doug eliminated Gus 21-16, 21-9 en route to his final match against Tom Ryan. Doug, unable to handle Tom in the first game, went on to take the second and tie-breaker game 20-21, 21-1, 11-3.

Bud Stang, after recently celebrating his 35th birthday, entered the Men's Senior, only to be introduced to the floor by this year's New York State Senior's Champion Hermann Neumeier. Hermann took two straight off Bud 21-16, 21-15. Nobi Ackerman fell short in his quest to challenge

Hermann before his next birthday. Jack Armstrong again defeated Nobi for third place 21-14, 21-2.

In the Men's Open the quarter-finals through the finals provided excellent racquetball for the Syracuse viewers. Jim Dollinger and Manny Gregorio played a two and one-half hour match that completely mesmerized a packed gallery, with Jim coming from behind to win 9-21, 21-20, 11-6. Dan Waingarten double faulted at 20-20 in his first game with fellow Rochesterite Leo Marsocci, and eventually lost the second game. Leo knew he was in for a match, but came through against Dan 21-20, 21-13. The finals pitted Leo against Jim Winterton, the number two seed. Although Jim scored quite a number of points, Leo dominated the match. Keeping Jim off balance and capitalizing on his errors Leo earned the Open title and the respect of all who attended. The scores over Jim were 21-20, 21-14.

New York

The Batavia and Genesee Area YMCA chose the Memorial Day Holiday weekend as their opportunity to host racquetball players from various parts of New York State in the First Annual Memorial Day Classic Tournament sponsored by Chuck Riggio of Chuck's Sporting Goods in the Genesee Country Mall.

The Women's A division of the tournament was won in two straight games by Donna Meger, one of the best women players on the East Coast, over Kathy Witzig. The Men's A division, highlighted by such talented players as Barry Russell, Larry Eiben, Doug Radz, Jim Winterton and Leo Marsocci — as well as 14-year-old Mike Levine, who finished the tournament by winning the Consolation Round of the Men's A — was won in two straight games by Marsocci over Dollinger.

The B divisions for both men and women were unusual in that the women's portion was run as a round robin tournament including exhibition matches against both Meger and Witzig, the A players, and the Men's division finals match squared off two longtime friends and teammates, Tim Schuth and local racquetball instructor and tournament director, Burt Corcoran. Corcoran took the B title in two straight games. Corcoran and Schuth have competed as teammates for Salmon Creek in the Rochester Metro League for the past several years. Two women from the southern tier, Debbie Korwin and Ida Hardy placed first and third respectively in the Women's B, while Elena Mildenberger of Eastern Hills Racquet Club came in second.

The C division for the men was won by another Rochester Metro League player, Kevin Watkins, with Andy Ransco placing second and Bill McBride winning in consolation play. Women's C was won by Sue Zientara with Debbie Derleth second.

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Wisconsin

The Sun Prairie Racquetball Club was the host site for the first annual Don Simon Realtors Pro Racquetball Tournament Aug. 11-13. Paul Ikier played flawless racquetball all weekend to capture the \$500 first prize. The field was comprised of 14 players invited to participate from Wisconsin and across the nation. Players like Ben Koltun, Steve Keeley, Steve Mondry, Joe Wirkus and Ikier led the way.

First round competition featured some surprisingly close matches. Sun Prairie's Don Chambers pleased the hometown gallery with a close 21-11 effort against Koltun in the first game. When his serves carried him to a 19-13 lead in the second game, the gallery was loving it. But Koltun wound up his power serves and brought the match to 20-19. Don had three more chances to score but could not. The final was 21-19.

Other first round matches were the following: Cary Tate d. Art Guenther 21-19, 21-2; Len Baldori d. Dan Frank 21-8, 21-15; Mondry d. Brad Armstrong 21-1, 21-10; Ken Frank d. Bob Glosser 21-4, 21-8; Keeley d. Bruce Thompson 21-14, 21-15.

Second round matches were all close. The most exciting was Wirkus' three-game victory over Mondry. Wirkus had Mondry down 9-1 in the third game. Steve got hot and tied the match at 9-9. Joe recovered the serve, got a point, then lost the serve to Mondry again. Then Joe regained the serve and finally tallied the 11th point on a Mondry error.

Cary Tate pushed Koltun again but fell 21-16, 21-19. Ikier defeated Baldori 21-8, 21-19. Keeley defeated Frank 21-11, 21-12. In the consolation bracket Chambers defeated Frank; Thompson received default from Glossner.

The finest match of the tournament was the Keeley-Wirkus semi-final. The players split the first two games, both were close, 21-15 Wirkus and 21-18 Keeley. Joe jumped to an early 9-2 lead in the tie-breaker. Keeley finally found the bottom board and rallied for a 11-9 comeback win. Wirkus made no errors, Keeley simply played superb racquetball.

The finals were set between Ikier and Keeley. Paul continued to play flawlessly. The first game was 21-2. Steve stayed close until 14 in the second game, then Paul quickly scored the last seven points. Koltun completely dominated Wirkus for third place 21-12 and 21-4. Thompson defeated Don Chambers for the consolation title 21-16 and 21-17. The top four players split the \$1,000 purse.

The tournament is planned for the second weekend in August again next year, with the hope that the purse can increase and a women's pro as well as amateur division can be added.

Michigan

The 1978 National Court Club Association - Wilson Sporting Goods Company, National Amateur Racquetball Regional Tournament was conducted at Southfield Racquetime Center, Southfield, MI, August 12 - 14.

Central Regional winners were:

Men's A: Rick Dern over Mark Richardson 21-18, 21-9

Women's A: Beth Mowery over Donna Henry, 21-19, 21-13

Men's B: John Richardson over Al Mack 21-8, 21-6

Women's B: Debbie Erhart over Cookie Wachter, forfeit

Men's C: Roy Leggat over Bob Rzepecki 21-13, 21-17

Women's C: Lydia Coator over Emile Pinto 21-16, 21-14

Iowa

The annual Sioux City - Rivercade Racquetball Tourney was held July 21-23 with 32 players competing in three divisions. Irvin Rodin captured the A Singles crown over Dave Evans 21-9, 21-11. Joe Pope defeated Randy Hisey in a thrilling B singles final which went to a tie-breaker. The scores were 15-21, 21-20, 11-1. The women's Open final also needed a third game for Sally Kloostra to defeat Rita Christian. The scores were 21-11, 20-21, 11-9.



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What's the Call?

Ask an Expert . . .

by Dan Bertolucci, USRA Associate Coordinator

Starting with the subject of the 10 second rule Dan Bertolucci, now in his second season as official pro tour referee, begins this series to clarify confusion that sometimes arises over racquetball rules.

Bertolucci, who also plays regularly in tournaments (he's among the top 50 men pros), says disputes over the 10 second rule *"don't come up too much in pro tournaments, but are a common sore spot in amateur matches."*

If a question over racquetball rules comes up in your game — and you want to know how to handle it the next time around — get an official interpretation by writing to Dan Bertolucci, *National Racquetball*, 4101 Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076.



How does the 10 second rule apply?

The 10 second rule refers to the amount of time both the server and receiver have in preparing themselves for play between points. After the referee calls the score, both the server and the receiver are entitled to up to 10 seconds to put the ball in play. So far so good . . .

The dispute generally arises when the server fails to check on the readiness of the receiver. If the receiver is not ready, he must signal so by raising his racquet above his head immediately after the score is called.

Such raising of the racquet is the only legal signal recognized. If the server serves the ball while the receiver is signalling *"not ready"*, the serve is taken over with no penalty, provided the referee acknowledged the signal.

The important thing to remember is that it is the server's responsibility to look and be certain the receiver is ready. After checking to see that the receiver is not signalling non readiness, the server may then serve. If the receiver attempts to signal *"not ready"* after this point, such a signal shall not be acknowledged and the serve becomes legal.

Ten seconds are allowed for both first and second serves. ●

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Plan rates for USRA Life Insurance are down 10 per cent for most members, with even greater reductions for those in higher age brackets. To check into a special enrollment period in effect until Dec. 1 contact **Albert H. Wohlers & Co.**, USRA Group Insurance Plan, 1500 Higgins Rd., Park Ridge, IL 60068. . . Longtime pro **Steve Strandemo** (read his ideas on center court strategy in this issue of *National Racquetball*) has signed with AMF Head as touring professional and technical advisor counselling on new products and helping develop the company's expanding racquetball program. . .

Betamotor, a manufacturer of mopeds based in Florence, Italy, has been sponsoring American racquetball events to reach young, college educated, upscale professional and managerial consumers with discretionary incomes exceeding \$25,000. Betamotor considers these racquetball players the ideal moped consumers. . .

Clyde Senters



Clyde Senters, who officiated at the Nationals last June, has been named Midwest Regional Sales Manager for Vittert Sports, supervising sales activities in 14 states. . . **Allen Sabbag** is new vice president - operations of Sports Illustrated Court Clubs, Southfield, MI. . . BKB Partners' racquetball/health centers in southern California have named **Spencer Garrett** operations manager.

REVELATIONS ON RACQUETBALL

New Study To Aid R.B. Marketing

With the phenomenal growth of racquetball as a recreational activity a pressing need has arisen for vital, up-to-date, indepth information for use by racquetball equipment manufacturers, court club owners and developers, and others who are considering entering this rapidly expanding market.

Intensified competition within the booming racquetball equipment market has made it vitally important that these companies achieve the most effective brand positioning within the minds of potential consumer buyers. Racquetball manufacturers therefore have a growing responsibility to continually monitor the kind of image or identity their brands have in the marketplace vs. competitors.

Likewise the proliferation of court clubs into new markets, coupled with intensified competition within existing ones, have resulted in a need for court club owners and developers to learn which specific facilities, services, programs and organized activities have the greatest appeal to both existing and potential members.

Both these critical needs will soon be resoundingly met by a forthcoming consumer research study called **REVELATIONS ON RACQUETBALL**. This ground breaking study will uncover meaningful information on brand, product line and corporate identity of racquetball equipment brands, as well as the relative attraction of various court club facilities and programs.

The pioneering research project is the

brainchild of Alan R. Nelson Research, Inc. of New York. From the study findings clients will learn who these racquetball players are, what they want, why they want it and in what direction the evolving racquetball market is headed.

The study will be conducted this year in two distinct phases and will be updated each year in the future. This will enable subscribers to have a barometer for tracking significant trends that occur in this changing market. The research findings will be made available to prospective clients on a syndicated basis. Through such a multiple sponsorship, the cost of participation for companies is a mere fraction of what one undertaken on a custom basis would be.

Phase I of the study will consist of a series of focus group session interviews and individual depth interviews. These will be conducted among specific male and female demographic and lifestyle groups comprising racquetball players, potential converts to the sport and industry professionals. Based upon the insights acquired from these revealing conversations a self-administered questionnaire will be devised and mailed to respondents in the second study phase.

Phase II of the study will involve the mailing of a comprehensive survey to a nationally representative sample of several thousand consumers. In addition completed returns from a specific group — more than 1,200 current racquetball players — will be obtained.

Clients will receive extensive up-to-date computer tabulations and an analytical report of the study findings at the completion of each study phase.

The developer of the study — Alan R. Nelson Research, Inc. — has extensive experience in innovative consumer research studies, including a highly acclaimed syndicated research project on spectator sports that included the measuring of credibility of specific athletic endorsers.

Here are the kinds of insights client subscribers will receive from the upcoming syndicated research study —
REVELATIONS ON RACQUETBALL:

- A comparative profile of racquetball players vs. non-players with respect to their attitudes, lifestyles, purchases, and the media they use
- A comparison of the public image of racquetball and its players vs. other participant sports
- A comparison of racquetball vs. other participant sports activities with respect to knowledge, interest, involvement and trend direction
- The relative influence of major factors that create an awareness and then an interest among consumers to first try and finally acquire a commitment to adopt the sport of racquetball
- Characteristics of those racquetball players who are most likely to convey favorable "word-of-mouth" advertising about racquetball and those who are most influential in persuading players to attend tournaments or buy a given equipment brand
- The types of racquetball product tie-ins directed at either current players or potential converts to the sport that consumers find most appealing and an analysis of programs with the most beneficial "rub-off" effect for corporate sponsors

- A "Comparability Quotient" indicating how much consumer image each product or service has that is appropriate for an affiliation with the image of racquetball

- Benefits (both physiological and psychological) that consumers desire from participating in the "ideal" sport activity and how consumers perceive racquetball as possessing these same characteristics

- The relative appeal that different types of racquetball court club facilities and services can have for existing and potential club members

- Opinions and attitudes industry professionals have toward the market

- A standardized format for measuring significant annual shifts within the racquetball market

- How each racquetball equipment brand is positioned in the minds of prime consumer prospects with respect to its image and identity in the marketplace — strengths and weaknesses perceived by consumers

- Specific areas of consumer dissatisfaction with existing racquetball product offerings that might lead to significant product improvements

- The degree of consumer responsiveness to concepts for new types of product introductions by (1) existing racquetball equipment manufacturers and as (2) sporting goods companies contemplating entry into the racquetball market

The cost per client for participation in the REVELATIONS ON RACQUETBALL study varies from \$2,000 to \$14,000 depending upon the kind of information required.

For further information contact: Alan R. Nelson Research, Inc., 220 E. 60th St., New York, NY 10022 or call 212-758-7573. ●

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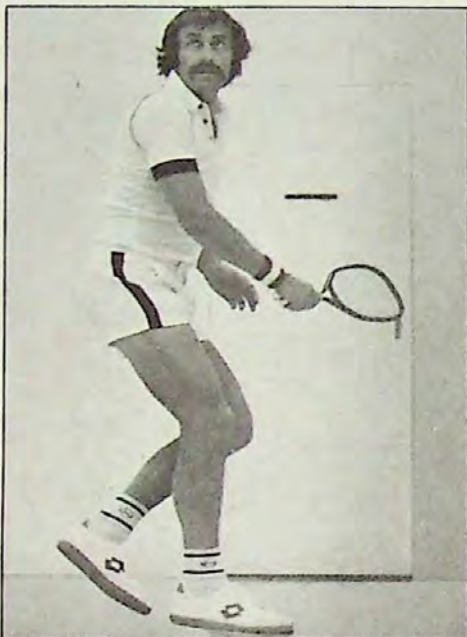
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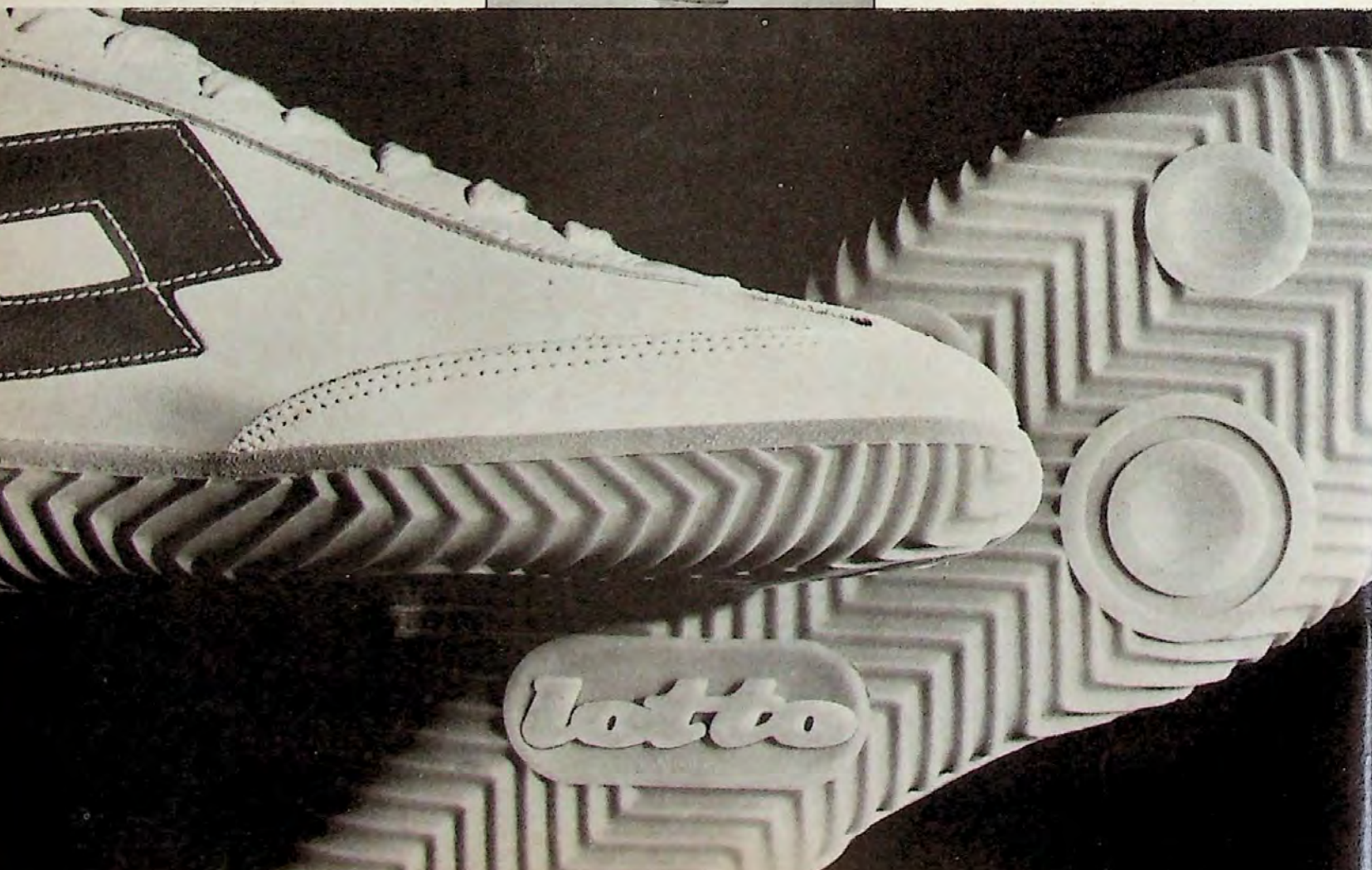
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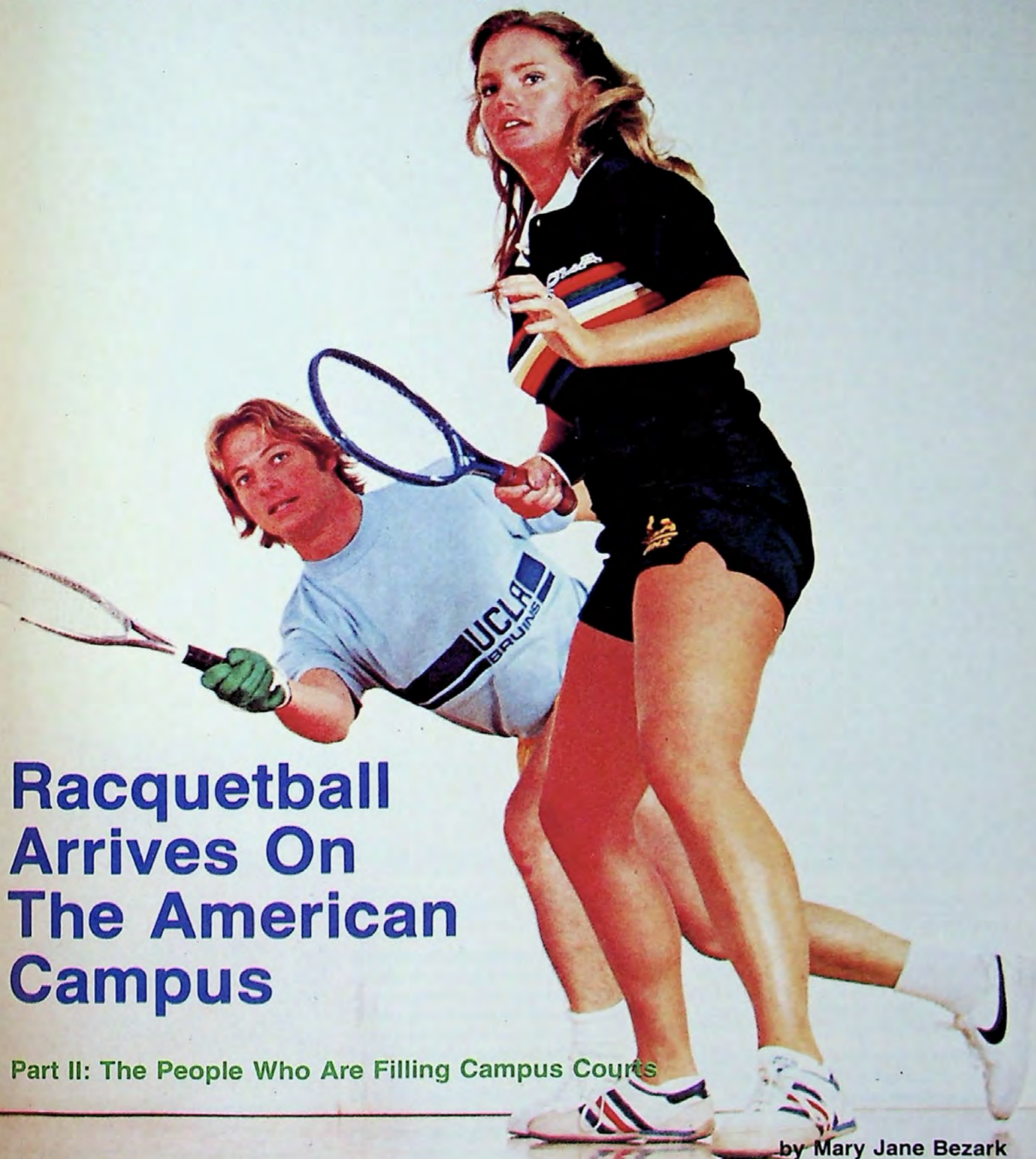
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Rah, Rah Racquetball



Racquetball Arrives On The American Campus

Part II: The People Who Are Filling Campus Courts

by Mary Jane Bezark

NATIONAL RACQUETBALL 67

National Racquetball's survey of colleges and universities from coast to coast — described on these pages in October — showed that the racquetball rage has hit campuses around the country.

While they put the data together, our writers discovered that students, faculty members, administrators and trustees are joining the racquetball crowd. Here are stories on some of the more notable players.



**Renee Johnson, Law Student, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC
Exercises Her Mind and Her Will**

"Racquetball is a game of calculation. Working off six surfaces isn't too unlike deciding how to make the most of a legal situation," says Renee Johnson, a first year law student.

Renee won the women's singles title at Grinnell College in Iowa when she was a senior there last year. She had

learned to play with her mother at their hometown YWCA in Rochester, MN, and then took an advanced racquetball class at Grinnell. *"There were only eight of us in the group, so we got plenty of individualized teaching. Our instructor gave me some good pointers about using the ceiling, and I've been using it ever since to my advantage — I like to play men, and my ceiling shots help me beat them."*

She enjoys racquetball particularly because *"It's a good break from academics and because it exercises my mind and will. I'm plenty competitive, so if I'm behind in a game I force myself to concentrate and don't let myself make any mistakes."*



**Mike Davis, University of Denver
Shannon Wright's Student**

A bit of just right timing got Mike off to a good start in racquetball. Or maybe you might say "just Wright timing," since he began taking racquetball lessons at a Dallas club where Shannon Wright was teaching in the last five months before she left for San Diego and her rise to pro prominence. Sensing Mike's interest in racquetball Wright started him in novice tournaments early in his series of lessons. By last year when he came to the university as a freshman he was an A player and placed first in men's singles in his school's intermural tournament. Mike, who plays every day when he can but never less than two hours five times a week, says one of his most productive techniques is "reading my opponent to find out his weaknesses. For instance before a tournament I like to watch my competition warm up so I can see what shots he's not getting in that day and hit to those."

When he came to Denver, Mike took up skiing. He was pleased to find that the shaping up he gets through racquetball play keeps him from getting as tired as the average downhiller. "My friends who started skiing at the same time I did come in at the end of the day and say, 'I can't move; I've got to go to bed.' But I'll be feeling fine and wondering, 'What's got them so beat?'"



**Roberta Kukulka, Williams College,
Williamstown, MA**

Conditioning for Football

When football season was over last year, Bob, a defensive lineman, still saw plenty of his coach — on a racquetball court. "I was walking by the college courts one day, and there was the coach playing up a storm. I'd played racquetball in high school, so I asked him for a game, and we got a regular slot from then on. Sometimes the coach would suggest we get a couple of team members into a game so those guys would run around and keep in shape."

"At Williams racquetball used to be mainly popular with the faculty, and squash was the big thing with the students, but racquetball is definitely growing here now."

Bob reports that racquetball does a lot for his football. "It's been terrific for my footwork, and you'd have to see it to know how much it's strengthened my legs."

Kukulka also likes racquetball for sociability, enjoys mixed doubles for that purpose. His doubles strategy is to "force the other guys back using longer volleys." For singles he's been working "to develop a better range of shots; at first I relied on power, but now I've got a shot with a real soft touch."

Scott Nau with Gus Farell in back court



**Scott Nau, M.D., Medical Intern,
University of Iowa, Iowa City**
He'll Prescribe Racquetball

"For me racquetball is the cake; the other sports I play — volleyball, tennis, badminton and softball — are just extra icing," says Scott Nau, a newly graduated medical student who's beginning his internship at the university hospital.

"For the next three years when I'll be working up to 14 hours a day at the hospital I'm not going to have any extra time. Luckily the courts here are within five minutes of the medical center."

Scott, who has won first spot in the U. of I. men's singles for the past four years and placed second in the Iowa state tournament, began play in a freshman P.E. class. "There are a lot of good players in Iowa City, and my game gives me a chance to be with people from all age groups. I like that about racquetball, and I love getting really physically tired. Being pushed to my limit was always a release for me from the tension that built up with work and study when I was in medical school."

Planning to be a pediatrician, he expects to recommend racquetball for his future patients, "because they can learn and play the game when they're young and then carry it over into their adult lives."

Jeff Siegel, University of Arizona
Pro of the Future?

During what would ordinarily be his fourth year of college Jeff may be playing racquetball on the pro tour. The 19-year-old student of international business says he's been told "it's a good possibility I can make the tour if I work on my advanced shot execution."

Whatever else happens to Jeff in the future it's unlikely that any one of the 30,000 students at Arizona will question his racquetball skill. According to the *Arizona Daily Wildcat's* description of the tournament at the university in March (a tournament which 250 students and faculty members entered), "Seigel marched to the championship by winning seven straight matches; he didn't lose a game in the entire tournament."

Asked what his game's strong points are he said, "My serve is good. Also, I psych myself up before playing so I feel angry - not mad or upset, but determined and confident. When I feel confident about my backhand I'll try shots that half the other players wouldn't even think of taking; I'll do it right, and it'll work."

A serious student Jeff was elected to a university men's honorary group for achievements in the classroom and on campus. One reason racquetball's important to him at the U. of A.: "It's a great way to get my mind off papers and exams for a while and focus on a whole new world."

Mary Bartholomew,
University of Chicago
Fights for the Center

Being able to tear around on a racquetball court sometimes makes Mary feel like a prisoner who's been let out after serving time.

"I injured my knee cap in gymnastics my sophomore year in high school and wasn't allowed to walk without crutches and a leg brace until I started college. I guess that's one of the reasons I get a special kick out of the competition of racquetball - and out of winning."

The satisfaction this English major in her fourth year gets from competing was obvious to spectators when she took her university's intermural

women's singles championship last spring. "My opponent played well and was fighting for center court, but I fought for the center too and outlasted her. (Outlasting, that's my specialty.) I lost the first game and won the second by the skin of my teeth, but the last game was a blowout."

Mary learned handball when she was a U. of C. freshman, didn't start racquetball until she took a gym class last year. At that time she played every day and sometimes twice a day. Now she averages four days a week and often plays, "just to goof off with friends, because there's a lot of pressure at this school, and you need to think about something besides work."

Bruce Hand, University of California at Berkeley

Started His School's Racquetball Club

Bruce was 11 years old when he began playing racquetball with his father, so as a freshman at Berkeley two years ago he was already looking for racquetball partners. Since the campus didn't have a racquetball club, he appointed himself to start one. Last fall he had persuaded the university to fund a club's expenses, and "by spring we had about 50 students playing regularly and had some good events scheduled every weekend."

One of the events the members enjoyed most was an open tournament in which 190 players participated. Bruce recruited "most of the best players in the area."

This year he estimates the club will have 100 members. The group's plans include trips to all the University of California's southern campuses.

At the top of his club ladder Bruce says he relies on "defensive play and control and a good low drive serve that I got from practicing a lot."

He plays four times a week, dropped 35 pounds off his six-foot one-inch frame last year. "Now I can have a little of that pizza and beer we go out for on club nights," he says.



John Mylnski, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN

Likes the Business End of the Game

John has visions of combining two of his big interests into one career. A hard core racquetball player and a marketing management student in his senior year he has his eye on a marketing job with a racquetball firm.

John's his university's singles champ and was a member of the top doubles team when he was a sophomore. "I play for the excitement and the workout and for the chance to excel at something that's relatively new on the sports scene. When I want to be serious, I get a singles game; for sociability it's doubles."

Notre Dame's racquetball club was started last year and is informal but active. The members observe each others games, exchange tips for improving their techniques. "This year we're planning league play with big ten schools," John reports. "The University of Illinois in particular has shown a lot of interest in competing with us. They've had a big jump on us because they've got 30 odd courts and a couple of strong A players."

But we've got a lot of good players too, and given the way we've been playing plus plenty of practice, we ought to be able to make things more than a little rough for them."



Ara Parseghian, Miami University (OH) Trustee and Former University of Notre Dame Head Football Coach

Core of His Fitness Program

"Racquetball became popular at Notre Dame very early, so I didn't have any trouble finding partners when I started four years ago," says Ara Parseghian, who coached the Fighting Irish for 11 spectacular seasons. (His record: 94 victories, 4 ties, 17 losses.)

For the moment an old football injury to his hip is keeping Parseghian off the courts, but ordinarily he plays three times a week. *"My friends and I play singles because we think it's the best way we can get a workout. Three games of singles or cutthroat give us plenty of activity, and we come out of there with a real sweat and feeling healthy."*

"My son taught me the game originally; I'd been playing handball and found I could get longer volleys with the new game."

"Coming from handball I got to be pretty good as soon as I learned the spin of the ball – the nature of the racquetball as opposed to a handball. It didn't take long to learn the shots and work up my serve, and at that point racquetball became the core of my fitness program."



Bob Bauer photo

Paul Haanstad, Philosophy Professor, University of Utah, Salt Lake City

Gets Players Into His Courses

"By playing racquetball I get to know a cross section of students instead of just the ones who gravitate to my department. Take the football player I met on the court. He and I started playing regularly, and after awhile he decided to take a very difficult course I teach – and he wound up getting 'A,'" Professor Paul Haanstad reports.

Paul, a handball player until five years ago, learned racquetball from some colleagues in the philosophy department. Two years ago he began tournament play as a C player; last fall he'd moved up to B status, entered the Rocky Mountain Regional Tournament known as "The Wild Bunch Open" and placed third. He's now classified as a low A player for state tournament purposes. In the University of Utah's intermural men's singles he's number two, but he and his wife are the top university's mixed doubles team.

Jim Kuska, left, and Bob Steele



Jim Kuska, Landscape Architecture Professor, University of Idaho and Bob Steele, Trust and Investment Officer, University of Idaho, Moscow

Muscles Intact

The professor-administrator team of Kuska and Steele likes to play racquetball every day at lunch time, and one or the other often gets out before breakfast to make the game possible. *"Courts are tight at Idaho, so if we have to sign ourselves up by 6:45 a.m., we do it," Jim Kuska says.*

Jim, who likes to get to his office at 7 a.m. anyway, is *"more efficient when I'm playing regularly; then I can work at full speed until eleven in the evening. If I don't play I get carboned up like a car firing on five cylinders, and I feel like I want to go home and go to sleep at 6 p.m."*

He also thinks being able to play a better than average game helps gain him his student's respect. *"Some of them (students) think a professor past 30 can't do anything athletic; it's fun to let them know I have a few muscles as well as my brain intact."*

For Bob Steele racquetball eases the pressure of life in the administration building. *"If I've been pushed to make decisions all day or been in meetings, and the pressure's building up inside me, slamming that ball around is a great way to release it all."*

Jim and Bob have played together for about two and a half years, entered their university's intermural doubles competition last spring and won every game.



University of Chicago Prof Saul Bellow Writes Racquetball Into His Novel

University of Chicago English Professor, Author Saul Bellow, may be the only Nobel prize winner who plays racquetball regularly.

He writes about it, too. In his best seller, *Humboldt's Gift*, which won a Pulitzer prize, Bellow's hero says "On some mornings I am lame, hardly able to straighten my back when I get out of bed but by midday I am on the court playing, leaping, flinging myself full length on the floor to scoop dead shots and throwing my legs and spinning entrechats like a Russian dancer."

Psych Grad student - State champ Uses Racquetball Therapy

Does a game of racquetball have anything in common with a psychotherapy session? The West Virginia state women's champion, who's also a psychological counselor thinks so, and she's already used racquetball to help several of her clients.

Molly Vass is finishing work on her doctorate in counseling at West Virginia University in Morgantown and plays racquetball at the university's coliseum. "Physical activity in general improves people's psychological state, but racquetball is particularly helpful in two ways," she explains.

"For one thing, because it's a sport that you can pick up without being especially adept at sports, it can do a lot for people who have a self esteem problem. I've taught clients to play, and as they succeed at each small step they feel a little better about themselves, can go on to the next step and eventually can tackle tough challenges.

"Another way racquetball can be therapeutic is that it helps people who have trouble with setting goals and with following through to reach them. These people use their energy in self defeating ways. Learning racquetball lets them channel their energy in a positive direction and gives them experience with setting their own goals and achieving them."

Molly started playing racquetball only two and a half years before she defeated a two time title winner at the state tournament last spring. She and a friend who coached her agree that her game has improved dramatically in the last year, that she's a lot more consistent and has greater confidence. One of the main reasons for that improvement: "I learned to break racquetball skills into sub-skills; it's the same principle that helps people with self esteem and goal setting problems.

"My friend, who's getting an advanced degree in physical education, broke what I was supposed to do down to the point where I had a picture of all the moves I was supposed to make, and he had me work on each one until I felt good with it before I went on. For example with my backhand I worked on turning my shoulder until that was automatic, then on getting the racket back and then on getting low enough.



"Before I had been trying to do too many things at once without really concentrating on any one."

Vass' tournament preparation also included playing six days a week, running a mile and a half every day, ballet class and drills.

Because she'd heard that she'd be up against a strong left handed player "I often practiced hitting as if I were playing a leftie. And I almost always played men at practice; getting adjusted to men's speed makes women's shots easier to handle."

West Virginia's women's champion not only hasn't been a racquetball player for long, she hasn't been much involved with any sport until recently. "I started the running, ballet and cross country skiing after racquetball began to click with me. Once that happened I got the feeling that if I tried hard I could be genuinely good at some of the different sports instead of just toying around with them."



University of Michigan Director of Sports, Jack Reznick, left, was the man who introduced former football star, Woody Neighbors, to racquetball.

Racquetball Puts Ph.D. Candidate Back in Competition

"Being an athlete has been an important part of my identity as long as I can remember," says University of Michigan intramural racquetball champion and racquetball club president, Woody Neighbors, a Ph.D. candidate in social psychology who had been a football star at Central Dauphin High School in Harrisburg, PA.

Neighbors entered Haverford College outside of Philadelphia to play football, but he stayed on to earn an undergraduate degree in psychology even after the school dropped intercollegiate football.

"About the time I graduated from Haverford in 1975 I began missing athletics. I found it wasn't so easy to round up 22 guys for a game of football or 18 for baseball. What's more I missed the 'butterflies' that go along with preparing for an official contest."

"And then came racquetball. One of my professors shoved a racquetball in my hand, and I've been playing ever since — first for conditioning and weight control (It took me about six months to lose 50 pounds), and then, starting in the summer of 1977, in tournaments. Now I'm so involved I'm teaching pro at the Imperial Court Club in Ann Arbor and a member of the Wilson Sporting Goods home pro advisory staff."

"Racquetball's perfect for a former team athlete like me. It's aggressive and it incorporates many of the moves from the sports I'd been playing all my life — football, basketball and baseball. Racquetball keeps me active and competing in sports again. It's made me feel good about myself."

Racquetball Teachers Invited to U. of Illinois Racquet Sports Symposium

At the University of Illinois in Champaign they're doing more than playing the game — they're researching it as well.

From June 13 through June 16 the College of Applied Life Studies and the Department of Physical Education, Continuing Professional Education Series, will hold "A National Symposium on the Racquet Sports," to gather teaching professionals and researchers in one place to present and share ideas about instruction and research in badminton, racquetball, squash and tennis.

Jack L. Groppe, symposium coordinator, says "We plan to invite the top teaching professionals in each activity to give clinics in their preferred area in addition to having some of the world's foremost researchers present to offer new ideas and information in the field of exercise physiology, biomechanics, motor learning and sport psychosociology."

"The main intent is to 'tie the knot' between teaching and research so one may assist the other."

Any racquetball teaching professional is eligible to attend. For a full description of the symposium and a response form write Jack L. Groppe, Symposium Coordinator, National Symposium on Racquet Sports, Conferences and Institutes, 116 Illini Hall, Champaign, IL 61820.

Science Fiction

The Day the Robot Beat Killer Dog Hogan

by Arthur Shay

I could hear Marty Hogan grunting as he lurched for balls that came off the wall at 150 miles per hour – a full eight miles per hour more than Hogan can hit! But I couldn't hear the other player grunt – or even his (or her) footsteps. After finding the peep hole into the court I witnessed the strangest match I had ever photographed or – for that matter – seen.

Having worked on some 50 *Life* magazine stories as an investigative reporter and photographer I am always alert to the possibility of discovering a hot story in an unlikely place.

I had just come to San Diego to work with Marty Hogan and Charlie Brumfield on a book, *Marty Hogan's Power Racquetball*, an attempt by Hogan, Brumfield and me to analyze the sources and techniques of Hogan's amazing performances on the racquetball court.

"You know how tough it is to work on the road," Leach Industries President Charlie Drake had said as we discussed the book in Steamboat Springs, CO. *"Come out to San Diego."*

I arrived one balmy evening, happy to get away from the cold Chicago winter, and Drake, Brumfield and Hogan picked me up at the airport and drove



me to a Chinese restaurant not far from the tuna fleet's moorings along the beautiful and mysterious San Diego waterfront. At night the lights of San Diego bejewel the dark hills running down to the ocean in tiarras of red and gold.

After a few perfunctory remarks about the food (I let Drake, in his overpowering politeness, order shrimps in lobster sauce for me) the talk turned to racquetball. What was happening in Chicago? they wanted to

know. How was my forehand developing in my withdrawal from handball? Did I get that call from Sports Illustrated? How was my racquetball book co-authored by Chuck Leve doing? Did Leve's temporary blindness as a master referee cure itself? Brumfield asked, only half joking.

I could tell from the way Hogan's eyes darted around the mauve lit room that he was restless. There were only seven or eight comely waitresses and only five or six knew who he was.

Fortune Cookie Clue

Brumfield suddenly reached for a fortune cookie and attempted to crush it in his right hand. He grunted and grimaced, changed his grip three times, but the best he could do was chip a small crumb from the corner. Drake then took the cookie from Brumfield and placed it between his palms and pressed. *"This takes a college professor,"* he gasped. But he gave up, handing it to Marty. Hogan cradled the cookie in his palm, then squeezed until his face turned red, but couldn't break it. *"There's something funny going on in this town,"* he said, throwing the cookie on the floor and stamping on it until it broke. He bent down and picked up the little slip of paper that cringed amongst the cookie crumbs. *"Don't sign anything, Marty,"* said Drake as Hogan held the slip under the candlelight. Hogan read aloud *"If you are reading this note, you are very strong. But you will soon meet someone who is stronger than you."*

From the way Hogan, alarmed, looked at Drake, and Brumfield, equally worried, looked at the rest of us and prudently left his own cookie unopened, I could tell that Leach Industries country was not the calm place its catalogue purported it to be. Anxiously I awaited the tour of the plant on the following day.

Drake let me borrow his Datsun 280Z from Hogan (Hogan's car with the "Number 1" logo was having a jacuzzi installed). Early the next morning I was at the vast Leach plant watching racquets and deals being made. The posters of the Leach players I had photographed were on the walls, but somehow my byline had been left off. *"An oversight,"* said Drake, with a covering smile. Mid tour he was called to the phone. *"Wander around,"* he said, *"Hogan and Brum are off practicing at George Brown's courts. We'll pick them up later."* As Drake

turned to go, I noticed that he had dropped a small gold key. I retrieved it to return to him, but he was gone. If Drake's mind could move as fast as his aging body — now in its mid thirties — what a tycoon he might have become, I thought.

I watched the intense men and women working on the Leach assembly lines, putting together the racquets that would move the racquetball industry into its first two billion dollar year — the same racquets that players all over the country would glow at after missing a million shots. *"It's good to get angry at your racquet,"* says racquetball psychologist Dr. Mike Gerson of New Jersey. *"It beats getting angry at yourself. A player should direct his or her anger at the racquet, the ball, the walls, the opponent — save yourself for the finer things of life — like love, for example."*

I turned a corner and it was then that I heard the unmistakable Hogan grunts coming from a doorway down the hall. . . I found the peephole in the door and saw Marty Hogan racing up and down the court, hitting the ball as hard as he could. Was he practicing alone? I wondered. I couldn't see into the far corner. . . But watching the speed of the ball returning from the hidden corner I knew there had to be someone there. . . Someone? No, because no one I knew of could hit the ball that hard! Some force! I shuddered, and trying to whip my camera to the peephole, leaned a little too hard on the door and suddenly the door pushed open and there I was on the secret Leach experimental and research court. Marty had a sheepish look on his face — even more sheepish than the look he had when refused a drink at the Storm Meadows bar at Steamboat Springs. "B-b-but I'm Marty Hogan," he had sputtered then. "I'm Jeff Bates, kid," said the bartender, introducing himself. "Let me see your ID."

Powerful Barrel

But now Marty Hogan just said *"Hi Art, thanks for that picture of me in Sports Illustrated ('Killer Dog' — Neat, huh?). Should have been on the cover. Oh,"* he waved his racquet at his opponent — a short robot wearing a number 76 shirt around a barrel-like body. The body was mounted on small wheels, and one long hinged arm emerged from it. At the end of the arm was taped a Leach racquet. *"This is R3 D3,"* Hogan added, in an unaccustomed flurry of politeness.

A shrill, metallic voice, not unpleasant but one-toned, replied *"Hi, turkey. How about a few points at a buck a point. . ."*

Hogan shook his head. *"Don't do it, Art. He's into me for 27 bucks. . . I think Brumfield programmed it. It's a left hander, so it's giving me a little trouble."* Marty looked behind him as he always does when Brumfield's name is mentioned. (The same way Brumfield looks around whenever Hogan's name is mentioned.)

"What's it do?" I asked Hogan.

"I hit at 153 miles per hour," said the robot. *"And I retrieve like you wouldn't believe. And my wheels never leave the floor — unlike your Hilechers and Serots."*

"How'd you do against it?" I asked Hogan.

"Lost the first game 21-4," said Marty. *"We were just getting into the second game when you interrupted us."*

I could take a hint. I left the court, placed my camera against the peephole and watched the second game.

Hogan served, grimacing and grunting. The ball came to the robot's backhand, low, with lots of topspin. The robot picked the ball up about an inch from the floor and pinched it for a kill into the left corner.

Troublesome Highs

It rolled up to the serve line. I could hear a whir, then zap! the ball was past Hogan's forehand, it bounced, hit the back wall and came out almost to the front wall, a step ahead of Hogan. Hogan looked at his racquet and hit it against the wall. After scoring six straight points the robot lost the serve to a slow passing shot down the right side. Hogan now began to serve soft garbage serves, high. The robot had a little trouble with high shots, tending to return them a little too high. Hogan would then roll out.

In a while the score was 15-15. Suddenly a beep beep emerged from the robot. "Excuse me," the robot rasped. "I have a call." There was a pause. "Mm," it said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Steele. I'm perfectly happy here at Leach. Yes I know Wilson is always looking for hard hitters, but - darn it - Charlie Drake constructed me." There

was a pause, then the robot seemed to perk up a bit. "A female robot... you're working on a tour... hey - let me think about that."

Hogan scowled. "You wanna play or you wanna discuss your personal life? Racquetball is a serious game... Serve."

The ball whizzed to Marty's left. He lurched after the ball.

"Point," said the robot. He paused and, in a voice suspiciously like a programmed copy of Brumfield's best psyching baritone, asked "Hey Marty when and where is the next Nationals?"

Later I asked Charlie Drake about his experimental robot. "I don't know what you're talking about, Art," he said, "and if you publish anything, I'll deny it."

We drove to the airport through the sparkling San Diego air in silence. "Just forget what you saw," said Drake, "I'll send you a couple of new composition racquets and a few T shirts with your name on them."

"You can't buy me," I said to Drake. "There are some things the world has to know." ●

When I got to my office the National Enquirer reporter was already there. She was young, pretty and waving a wad of \$100 bills. I threw her out and began writing the above for my loyal fans reading National Racquetball.



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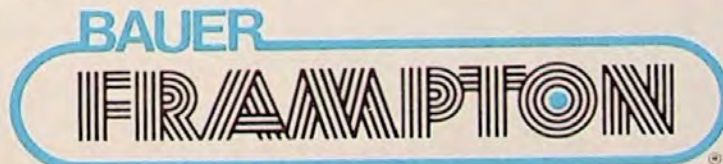
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Hogan's Slips Disturb Him

Dear Mr. Kendler:

Thanks for your encouragement every year concerning the Christian Attitude Award given at the Nationals for sportsmanship.

This last June the players voted Peggy Steding the winner for the pros with Mike Yellen runnerup. Jeff Bowman won the amateur award, with Bill Schmidtke runnerup. The winners received small bibles and plaques, both engraved with their names.

Past winners were 1975-Pro Steve Keeley, Am Jay Jones; 1976 - Pro Craig McCoy, Am Gary Lusk, and 1977 - Pro Sarah Green, Am Gordon Kelly.

The Christian Attitude Award honors those men and women who convey Christian attitudes on the court — they don't cheat, they are fair in their dealings with their opponents and they don't swear, especially using God's name in vain.

I have talked to and warned Marty Hogan several times now concerning his swearing, especially using God's name in vain during and between matches. This time it was in the finals against Brumfield.

When it was close in the middle of the second game Marty's swearing to get psyched up outside the court was audible to the crowd. Later, in the glass during the presentations, I heard his mother thank God for Marty's victory. . . This was good. I reminded her of her son's swearing and asked her to caution him.

The following week at a tournament in California I talked to Marty about his swearing, and he respectfully kept his head down as I ran it all down for him, and then he acknowledged that he had understood what I was trying to tell him. Later in the day — to my disappointment — he slipped and used the Lord's name again — even twice. I yelled from the crowd that the ref should have given him a technical. I believe Marty heard my shouting, because he didn't cuss anymore.

Bobby Bible
Long Beach, CA

Players Were Happy

Dear Dan:

I really appreciated everything you did for us in Philadelphia. I have never been to a tournament as well organized as this in all of my short career. I really enjoyed the trip to the amusement park — even the animal kingdom. Phew!! I hope to play at least half the Pro-Ams this year, so I'm looking forward to seeing you and maybe even playing you.

Ross Harvey
Montreal, Quebec

Should Women in Racquetball Go Somewhere Else?

Please! No more recipes in the women's section unless you're going to put them in the men's section too. Better yet why not integrate the articles regarding women into the rest of the magazine?

J. O. Meyer

Our "Women in Racquetball" pages, introduced to readers in May, 1977, have drawn more praise than condemnation. But National Racquetball would like to know how other readers feel about the women's section. Should we keep it? ED.

When It's Getting Better

Dear Carol:

Please convey my appreciation to Pat Huggins for the illustration for my story, "The Secret" that ran in the August issue. Not only is it well done, but it also captured the tone of the story accurately.

The women's section is getting better each issue. Your comments on stress are right on mark.

John Chelucci
Greenville, DE

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REVELATIONS ON RACQUETBALL

It's About Time

From time to time we hear of many new ideas, plans or programs relating to the ever-growing world of racquetball. Some of these ideas are good, some bad, but truly few are outstanding. I'd like to tell you about one of the most exciting concepts to come along in a great while.

The concept is in the form of a consumer research study currently under way entitled REVELATIONS ON RACQUETBALL done by the well-respected New York firm of Alan R. Nelson Research, Inc. For the first

time in our history and as a direct result of this study a comprehensive and detailed report on the current and potential racquetball market will be available.

Some research companies develop a study and sell the results to prospective clients without having the initiative to consult them prior to the design of the study. Alan Nelson has had the

initiative to contact the USRA and has spent several months of intensive discussions with other industry professionals in order to determine their needs and requirements prior to the development of the study proposal.

As a result of Mr. Nelson's arduous efforts, a potential subscriber can have complete confidence that the research findings will yield actionable results that will provide authoritative answers to the varied and complex questions that are now confronting people in our industry.

We at the USRA feel this painstaking research project, which is outlined on page 64, will be of vital importance to the racquetball industry, no matter if it concerns manufacturers, sponsors, advertisers, club owners or promoters.

We have been highly impressed with the format and structure of the project. The professional staff of Alan R. Nelson, Inc. has poured the same intensity into this racquetball project that they put into their highly acclaimed survey on spectator sports, SPORTS INSIGHTS, which among other things, dealt with the effectiveness and credibility of sports personalities.

The areas that will be explored in the study go further than anything that has been attempted before and will provide the clients with a profound understanding of the market that heretofore has never been attained. The fast changing racquetball market requires us all to have up-to-the-minute data in order to be better responsive to the changing needs of consumers. This study will provide that data. ●



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