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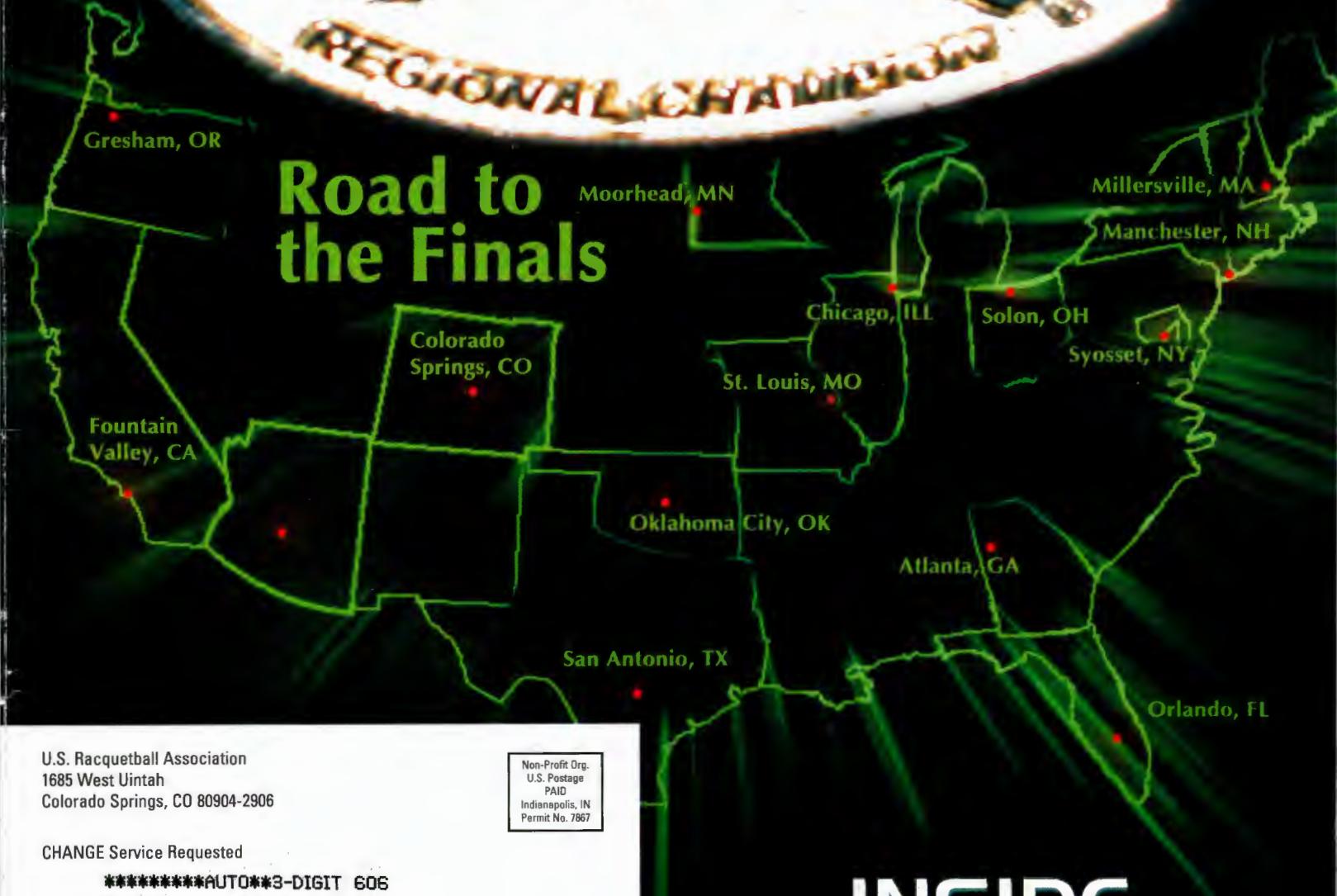
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Volume 17, Number 2

March/April 2006



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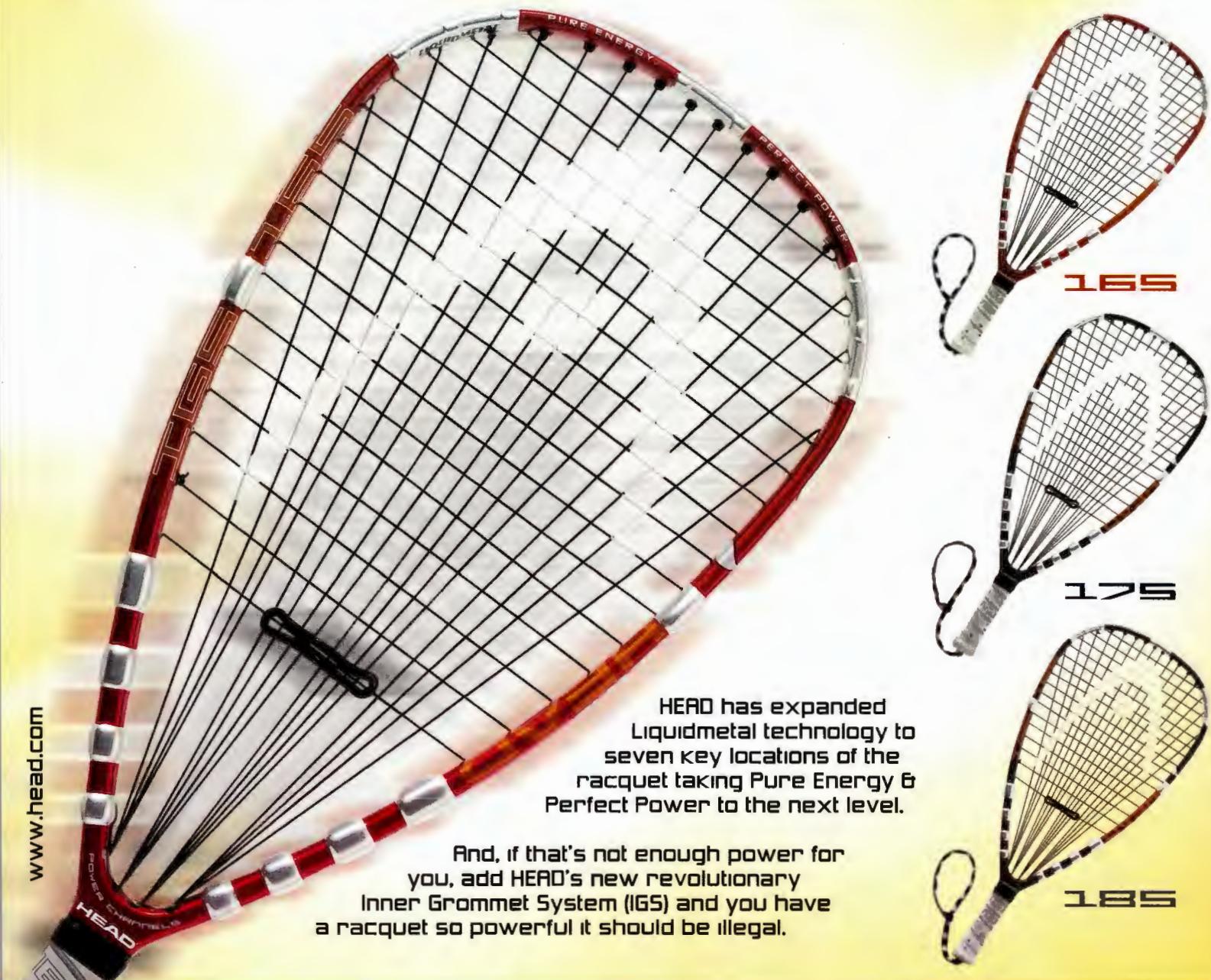
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INSIDE

National Singles Entry Form
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Election Ballot



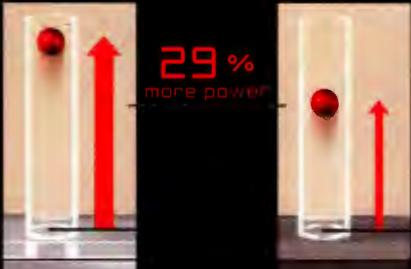
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Mission Statement

USA Racquetball (USAR) is the National Governing Body for the sport of racquetball, recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee and is committed to excellence and service to our members. We provide opportunities for members and enthusiasts to actively participate in the sport, through sanctioning of events, administration of programs and development of competitive teams.

Vision Statement

To provide racquetball opportunities in the sport of racquetball for all levels of participation through:

Objectives:

- **MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT** - USAR values its members and will strive to provide the best possible member services at all levels.
- **MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT** - USAR believes that racquetball is a lifetime endeavor and the benefits of health, recreation, and competition should be available to everyone. USAR will strive to expand its membership in order to share these benefits with as many players and supporters as possible.
- **PROMOTION OF THE SPORT** - in order to sustain a strong player base USAR will promote the numerous benefits of participation through mass marketing efforts.
- **COMPETITIVE SUCCESS** - USAR strives to maintain America's position as the number one racquetball nation in the world. Success at the elite levels has a positive influence on every other facet of our sport.
- **SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS** - USAR values its relationship with sponsors and will continue to maximize benefits and exposure.

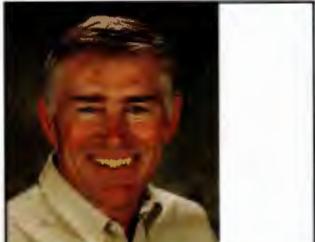


FEATURES



National Singles Entry Form

Sign up now for the nations most prestigious and exciting amateur event. Special divisions for women.



Strandemo's Rules Poster

This months poster explains the screen serve rule.



Hall of Fame

Mary Lyons, Sue Pfahler and Connie Martin are elected to the 2006 USA Racquetball Hall of Fame.



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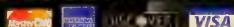
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FROM THE TOP

James Hiser, Ph.D.

U S A R Executive Director



What's wrong with Racquetball? And why write this article?

Over the past 25 years, I have worked with players, coaches, administrators, sponsors, and numerous international racquetball enthusiasts from around the world. I feel fortunate to have had these

experiences and these opportunities have allowed me to develop what I hope is a wide perspective of the issues confronting our sport.

Each year a debate seems to develop regarding the status of racquetball. This year I have decided to write a series of articles that are basically a culmination of many of my discussions over the years. Hopefully the summary will provide "food for thought" and a stimulus for action to direct our efforts in a direction to both grow and improve our sport.

Premise -

"The future of our sport depends on getting new/younger players onto the courts."

The 2005 SGMA participation figures indicate that racquetball is up 14%. Although inspiring, the alternate figure of racquetball participation declining 45% since 1990 is perhaps more sobering. Fitness and racquetball clubs continue to recruit players by developing some form of development initiative with a focus on non-competitive play, fun and enjoyment. These programs should be applauded and supported, but the bigger issue is what are clubs doing to keep these players? The answer, unfortunately, is 'not much.' The clubs successful in promoting racquetball have dedicated personal effort and funds to developing

and maintain their racquetball programs. But these clubs are the minority – the majority simply accept racquetball as a self-programming and promotion activity within the club. Until clubs realize that continual promotion and guidance is necessary for racquetball success (as it is with aerobics, for example), racquetball will continue to be "the unknown fitness activity."

Recruiting juniors is not easy. Kids today are different. The traditional values that racquetball embodies, although just as important as they were in the past, are out of pace with "fast food" kids and parents in this century. Racquetball is not "cool." The difficulty lies in the entertainment-driven society in which we live. From early ages, kids are provided a stimulating environment of television, video, DVD, computers, internet, video games, online learning, game packs, and snowboards. What a time to be a kid!

So how do we make racquetball cool? Team participation has combined the excitement of competition with the rewards of peer acceptance. In both Missouri and Oregon, the creation of high school teams have resulted in tremendous junior participation. Players play, not only for themselves, but also for their schools, their teammates, their coaches, and their families. The recognition is significant, important, and stimulating. The same formula has developed success within the collegiate ranks. We need to develop high school and collegiate leagues in every state!

Premise: Why doesn't racquetball have recognizable heroes or sponsors?

To be continued next issue...

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2006 USA Racquetball Board E L E C T

To vote, please follow the directions published in the pre-printed ballot bound between these pages. Ballots are provided to adult USAR members only (voting is limited to those over 18), and voting will not be included with the National Singles entry. If your ballot is missing, you

Cheryl Kirk

As a USAR Board member, I will aggressively promote racquetball for adults and juniors alike, with particular emphasis on growing women's participation. Many years of racquetball involvement plus 27 years in the corporate world make me a strong candidate for a Board seat – I'm a hands-on leader, teacher, facilitator...and I'm a great believer in keeping promises and seeing the job done right.



As a Worldwide Operations Director with McDonald's Corporation, I lead McDonald's Global Olympics Team, managing multiple activities associated with serving the world's athletes, journalists and spectators at each Olympic Games.

Since the mid-1970's, racquetball has been my friend and it's provided many pals (and my husband!) over the years. It supports my chocolate habit and supplies the balance I need to prevent spontaneous combustion in the business world!

I serve as vice president and newsletter editor for the Illinois State Racquetball Association. I am a USRA Lifetime Member; a member of the NMRA and WSMRA; a five-state Ektelon Regional Advisor; and contribute on the Ektelon Advisory and Women's Councils.

I'm excited at the prospect of serving the Board and its members. I hope you'll feel comfortable casting your vote for me this spring.

email: cheryllkirk@aol.com

Lance Gilliam

Promoting and advancing the sport of racquetball is one of my life goals. I feel like I can approach any stranger and talk about playing racquetball because I truly believe that it is the greatest sport ever invented.



I began playing racquetball tournaments in 1976. For the past 29 years, I have competed in Local, State, Regional, National, Professional and International Racquetball events. I have been a sponsored player for 27 years, and taught racquetball for more than 25 years. I am currently the Treasurer for the Texas Racquetball Association. I feel that my financial background as a Certified Public Accountant will continue to be an asset to the Board of USA Racquetball.

For three years I have served as Treasurer for USA Racquetball. During this time our Board has been dealing with dwindling financial support from the USOC. I feel that we have weathered the storm, and now are in a better position to grow and prosper.

It is important for the Board to have officers with financial expertise. I believe that my knowledge and experience as a CPA gives USA Racquetball stronger financial direction. Thanks for taking your time to read this and please don't forget to vote!

Lance A. Gilliam
Certified Public Accountant



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may request a numbered ballot by calling the national office at 719-635-5396 and presenting your membership number. Deadline for receipt of completed ballots is **FRIDAY, May 5, 2006**

AND THE CANDIDATES ARE...

Lynn Stephens

I believe that the USAR must improve the support and communication between it, the states, its current members, the clubs, and all racquetball players. The USAR has an obligation to provide the support the states need to promote racquetball, and the states have an obligation to use that support to grow racquetball in their state.

The USRA and the RMC must work together better to provide that support. The racquet companies are the ones that stand to gain the most from racquetball's growth and they must share their part of the burden in promoting that growth. The states also must step up to the plate and do their part.

With 4 million players and just 13,000+ members it is imperative to make sure that every one of those players know the National and State organizations exist and what they have to offer to the recreational player. I have a plan to make that happen.

In my 6 years as President of the North Carolina Racquetball Association, my focus has always been on what players of every level want from their organization. It has been a successful strategy, and will continue to be my focus if elected to the USAR Board.



Joanne Pomodoro

I would consider it an honor to serve on the USAR board. My passion for the sport, experience as a player, teaching pro, Massachusetts Racquetball Association board member and past president, in addition to my marketing background would make me an ideal candidate for the position.



The future of racquetball lies in the development of the junior and collegiate programs, promoting local, national and senior events, fund raising efforts and increasing USAR membership.

Although the industry reports an increase in sport participation, it is a fact that clubs are taking out courts at a concerning rate. Owners are faced with a fiscal and space challenge. Most follow trends and clubs that don't have a full-time racquetball pro see courts as under-utilized.

I'd like to be part of the solution to help our sport prosper and grow. The challenges are clear, the objectives evident, we need to do the following: invest back into the grassroots programs, gain the interest and support of the club owner, bring the game into the communities, schools and groups, gain press coverage on a regular basis not just at tournament time.

To achieve this initiative we need the support and the collaborative effort of the USAR, the pro tour, amateur players, manufacturers and financial investors. Let's form a unified front, coast to coast and develop a campaign with one voice, one goal, "PROMOTE OUR SPORT AND SAVE THE COURTS".

The Douglas Kitchens and Baths

New York City Pro-Am Long Island

January 19-22, 2006 *by Dave Negrete*

The event went off without a hitch this year as unseasonably warm temperatures were outside which helped heat up the fishbowl stadium court inside. Over 250 amateurs invaded the Sportime of Syosset for the Douglas Kitchens and Baths Pro Am this weekend and were treated to some top notch IRT racquetball. With experienced event director Tom Keogh at the helm the event turned out to be one of the best events on the IRT this season. The players were witness to some awesome racquetball with a three-hour battle between six-time number one Cliff Swain and Mexico's phenom Alvaro Beltran and some fantastic amateur matches.

The round of sixteen's saw a few great matchups. #1 Jack Huczak easily defeated intercollegiate champion #16 Ben Croft in three. Ben seems to be improving with each event. #8 Mike Guidry outlasted #9 Jason Thoerner in four relatively easy games. Thoerner struggled in this match to bring his game up to the next level. #5 Rocky Carson took out #12 Josh Tucker in three straight as Tucker battled not only Rocky but the flu bug that had hit the IRT. #4 Jason Mannino got revenge for a loss last season to #13 Kyle Veenstra and prevailed this time in three. #14 Mitch Williams gave #3 Cliff Swain all he could handle bowing out in three tough games. #6 Alvaro Beltran had all that he could handle but wins in the end in four games against #11 Chris Crowther. #7 Shane Vanderson did not want a repeat sixteen round loss like last years event and buckled down to beat #10 Andy Hawthorne this year in three games. #15 Alejandro Herrera move on with the early morning withdrawal of Kane Waselenchuk. The absence of Waselenchuk was felt at the event as he works out his contractual negotiations for his racquetball future.



Doug Walsh (center) of Douglas Kitchens and Baths the title sponsor of the NY event.

The first two quarterfinals matches went off on time as Huczak defeated Guidry in four games 11,0, (6), 1. Jack was in control for most of the match although Guidry did come alive in the fourth and surprised Huczak taking the game. Mike did mention after the match that this would most likely be his last year on tour. Long Island is a special place for the veteran pro as he won is first and only event here in 2004. The IRT will miss Mike Guidry and all that he brings to the sport of racquetball. In the first match Shane Vanderson faced off against Alejandro Herrera from Colombia, Herrera was a little awestruck as he made his first quarterfinal appearance of his young career. Shane took total advantage of Alejandro's nerves and welcomed him to the big show with a resounding victory 6,1,4. The third match was one for the history reel. This would be the third event in a row that Swain and Beltran have met and each one has been a war. This match would be no exception as the first ball was struck at 7:30pm and the last one killed at 10:40pm. This match could be compared to some of the epic battles of the Monchik/Swain days. Cliff had the advantage in the third up two games and an 8-4 lead but Beltran battled back and took advantage of a few Swain miscues to take the game 11-9.



Tom Keogh and staff at NY

Game four was a seesaw battle that went overtime with Beltran on top 13-11. Game five saw Swain jump out to a lead again at 9-5 only to have Beltran fight his way back for an 11-9 win and the match. Next up were Jason Mannino and Rocky Carson. This match did not let the crowd down at all as Jason was his usual diving self and Rocky was shooting the ball. Mannino would avenge his loss to Carson from the Choice Hotels US OPEN and win this match in four games (5), 5,10,8. Rocky had a chance in the third to take a 2-1 lead but unforced errors would plague him in the match.

At packed house showed up for the semi-finals on Saturday evening. Alvaro Beltran and Shane Vanderson were first up and the match did not let anyone down. "Vandy" battled hard in this one but Beltran's pinches were to good, as he would take the first two games 11-9 and 11-8. Shane would continue firing and his serve cane alive in the fourth to win the game 11-6. Alvaro regrouped in the next game and got the corners going again to take the game and match 11-7. Beltran would advance to his second finals in a row on Sunday. In the next match between Jack Huczak and Jason Mannino, Huczak would come out attacking right away and take the first game 11-3. Mannino regrouped and seemed to have the second game in hand but Jack would come back and win 11-9. In true Mannino fashion eh stayed tough and retrieved everything Huczak hit at him to win the third 11-6. The fourth could have gone either way as both players traded points but in the end it would be Huczak on top taking the match 11-9 and moving on for a rematch of the Riverside event the week before against Alvaro Beltran.

The final was all that the fans and sponsors expected, great racquetball. Alvaro was still looking for his first IRT title and Jack was looking to put more space between himself and Waselenchuk in the rankings. Beltran spent a lot of time diving in this match as Huczak found a way to control center court by using a wide variety of angle passes in this one. The fitness level of Huczak would eventually win out in this final as Jack goes on to win his second IRT event in a row 9,6,4.

The event would not be a success without the continued title sponsorship of Doug Walsh of Douglas Kitchens and Baths

This year temperatures were in the sixty's this year, a sharp contrast of last year's blizzard conditions.

Thanks you to Pat Bernardo of Racquetworld.com for your support of the event.

Great to see Scott Winters out playing in the event and representing his company Ektelon to it's fullest.

This event continues to attract new players every year as Tom Keogh puts on a first class event. The players kept Justin the owner of Active Force pro shop located in the club very busy with a record number of racquets to restring over the four-day event.

Craig McCoy Pro-Am

Riverside California

January 12-15, 2006

by Dave Negrete

The IRT was welcomed back at one of the most famous racquetball clubs in the history of the sport, The Tournament House IN Riverside California. Many IRT greats have played here in the past, Rich Wagner, Charlie Brumfield, Steve Lerner, Ruben Gonzalez and of course Craig McCoy. Craig was an inspiration to many that had the opportunity to see him play. He had a sweet forehand and backhand stroke and was one of the premier lefties of his era. He not only was a great singles player but held many national titles playing doubles. Craig died suddenly at the age of 39 after a game of racquetball from a heart attack. It is with great honor that the IRT and the Tournament House carry on his name with a huge racquetball event.



The event this weekend started off on a sad note with the passing of Robin Dixon's father earlier in the week. Although a very trying time for the Robin and his family the local racquetball community rallied around him and continued on with the event. Robin has long been the owner of the Tournament House with the Lerner family. When you wonder why we play racquetball and what it does for your body and soul all you had to do was witness the friendships and out pouring of support Robin had at the event to understand the true meaning of how racquetball effects our lives. The IRT wishes the Dixon family our sincere condolences with his recent loss.

On to the event. The early rounds saw some great match ups on paper and some lived up to the billing. Japan's best Hiroshi Shimizu continues to show improvement in his game as he played Jack Huczak tough in a three game loss. Outdoor guru Greg Solis showed that he had some skills indoors as he qualified for his first IRT stop but was stopped cold by Rocky Carson. Solis will be waiting for a rematch at the next outdoor event. Minneapolis native Aaron Granberg also made a strong showing pushing Jason Mannino to four games. Aaron is going to be a threat on the tour. A new racquet was not enough for Kyle Veenstra to take out Shane Vanderson as he bows out in three games. Josh Tucker still is struggling to find that big point to move on to the quarters as he goes down to Alvaro Beltran. Look for Josh to break thru soon. Columbia's Andres Hererra gave Cliff Swain all he could handle before losing in four. The two toughest matchups saw Jason Thoerner playing Chris Crowther for the first time on the tour and coming out on top in a four game battle. The other tough match was Andy Hawthorne being taken out by Mitch Williams in a tough back and forth battle.

The quarterfinals kicked off with a tough rematch of the Choice Hotels US OPEN where Cliff Swain won the five game war over Mexico's Alvaro Beltran. This match was a seesaw battle with Alvaro coming out on top this time. Players showed some inconsistency in their game after the holiday break. Swain had trouble finding the front wall and his serve and Beltran seemed to play flawless ball in streaks. Beltran wins (6), 4,0, (7), 0. The second match of the evening featured Jack Huczak and Jason Thoerner. This match was all Huczak as he made the game look

easy. This was not one of Thoerner's best performances on the tour but he will be back strong in New York. The Jason Mannino Shane Vanderson match was next and after a few friendly words were exchanged, a technical on Mannino and a shot to Shane's leg, Mannino got fired up and ended this match quickly. The last match of the night saw Mitch Williams in his first quarter of the year against Rocky Carson. This was a good match as Mitch introduced himself to the crowd with some blistering serves. However, Rocky was ready for everything Mitch threw at him and came out on top in three straight.

The semifinals were set with Jason Mannino coming to the court ready to take out Alvaro Beltran. Jason started out very strong and Beltran could not find the front wall as Jason takes an early 8-0 lead. Beltran suddenly caught fire and surprised Mannino with some great gets and shots taking game one from Mannino 12-10. Jason would come out firing on all cylinders in the second forcing Beltran into many mistakes winning convincingly 11-1. Beltran caught fire again in the next two games not skipping a ball and putting away everything Jason hit at him to reach his first final of the season. 11-3,11-2. The next match pitted doubles partners against each other as Jack Huczak looked to reach his second final of the year meeting Rocky Carson. Rocky played some great ball in the first game keeping Jack retrieving and out of center court winning 11-6. Jack came out the rest of the match much more focused and withstood the challenges presented to him by Carson. Jack would go on and win the match 11-6,11-8,11-9 and reward himself with a final appearance for his birthday.



Alvaro's kids in Riverside.

The stage was set with Huczak trying to earn himself a great birthday present with an IRT tour title and Beltran trying to claim his first IRT title. Alvaro was the first to strike as he had the crowd behind him with many fans coming up all the way from Tijuana and taking the first game 11-5. This match was a match of streaks as both players ran points on each other in five's. Huczak would not deny himself his birthday wish as he battled to take the title winning the next three straight 5,9,9. Hats off to Son Nguyen of One Shot Sports for all his support and effort in bringing this event to Riverside. Also thanks to Big Bill and Jeff for spending the time to set up the video for the event for proracquetball.net. Also to Willie Tilton for offering the live audio and video Internet feeds for the event. Brent Avery your support of the IRT does not go unnoticed as we look forward to your great event in February at the American Athletic Club in National City. Thanks Brent.

Thanks go out to the Tournament House staff for your kindness and endless hours it takes to run an event this size. It was also great to see WPRO professional Rhonda Rajisch and former WPRO professional Amy Foster battling it out in the men's singles and doubles divisions.



International Racquetball Tour

Seven Year Itch



by Jean Gallagher and Linda Mojer

Heading into its 7th year, Denver's annual Racquet for the Cure benefit tournament went nationwide to attract the attention and support of players who – in turn – hosted companion fundraisers from coast to coast. The result was an incredible year of successful benefit events for the cure, and developments that promise to make the coming months even more exciting.

At this year's founding event, the Denver Athletic Club venue hosted a satellite WPRO pro stop, which drew six top tour athletes to a grueling competition in the mile high city, and included a full schedule of promotional and fundraising events for the pros. They headlined clinics, gave exhibitions, donated equipment, time and effort – then dropped everything to pair up with Colorado's top male players for a spirited round of mixed doubles. Oh, and they played singles, too.

In their formal tour playoff, WPRO No.2 Rhonda Rajsich advanced into the final with a win over Kristin Walsh in four games, while No.3 Cheryl Gudinas took her semifinal win over Angela Grisar in a tough five. Top honors went to Rajsich after she outlasted Gudinas in their straight game final on Saturday afternoon. Earlier, DAC pro and No.10 ranked Johanna Shattuck had joined No.19 Vivian Gomez in filling out the opening round, along with local challengers Cindy Tilbury and Marcia Richards.

The Racquetball.com Pro-Am Mixed Doubles fundraiser invited local men's open players to make a \$100 donation to be paired with a pro player. Of the total division

entries, half was set aside for the grand prize and the other half earmarked for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Early on Superbowl Sunday, Travis Parrill and Chile's Angela Grisar took a tough win over John Rhodes and top Mexican southpaw Vivian Gomez for the cash and glory. Thanks go out to the guys, for making this new division successful, plus so entertaining to watch. And a

special thanks to Angela Grisar, who declined her winnings in order to donate them to the weekend's fundraising effort.

Keeping with its "women's only" tradition on Saturday, ladies of all skill levels teamed up to challenge each other for the top spots in singles and doubles. Some showed up just for doubles, some just for singles, and some stretched it out with both. Packed into their playing schedules, they found time to watch the pro rounds, visit the sponsor and demo tables, take in a quick massage by Peg Snyder and gorge themselves on a fabulous lunch sponsored by nearby Littleton's Bear Rock Café.

Among the many event souvenirs, each of the women received a complimentary pink grip, donated by Python Racquetball, which were put on at no charge by Travis and Scott Parrill of The



Ladies enjoy downtime between matches on Saturday.

Racquet, who also had pink strings available and offered a pink ribbon stencil for a special finishing touch.

At the end of the day, we all retired to the DAC's Grand Ballroom for an evening of camaraderie, guest speakers, silent auctions, prize awards and celebrations. Each of the evening's guest speakers were breast cancer survivors, who touched the crowd with stories about how their lives had changed after being diagnosed. Committee members shared more happy news, from how much the events have raised nationwide to date ... to

www.RacquetForTheCure.com



Organizers, pros and volunteers lined up for long-hours. L-R: John Foust, Jean Gallagher, Marcia Richards, Rhonda Rajsich, Alan Beilgard

inspirational recollections of how the Komen Foundation was established in Peoria. From the audience, the DAC's CEO Andre van Hall and USAR Executive Director Jim Hiser were on hand to lend their support to the tournament's good work.

To celebrate the day's team events, the procession of winners kicked off with Lindita Winters cruising the prize table to stumble on an Ektelon signature pink racquet that had been hidden among the dozens of items offered by sponsors and supporters. Door prizes were awarded to the playing couple that had been married the longest (Jessie and Enrique Carbalal), the player who traveled the farthest

(Angela Grisar from Chile!) and the highest point earner for their team (Sara Sikorski, one of the four players in the family who had taken part).



The new Racquetball.com Mixed Pro-Am Doubles event was a hit.

WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL RACQUETBALL ORGANIZATION



Rhonda Rajsich dives against Cheryl Gudinas in her way to a finals win.

And finally, a spelling bee for those who thought they could spell Rajsich without any help, which went to Jo Shattuck, after no one in the crowd could get it quite right.

All in all, the Denver founding event was a great success, raising the committee's personal best of \$8,000 for the weekend, and reaching a cumulative total of \$28,300 since its startup in 2000. Added to the \$28,500 raised by the four recent events held in Peoria, Omaha, Cincinnati, and Petaluma, California, racquetball players have raised over \$56,000 to fund breast cancer research and aid. Give yourselves a hand!

The RFTC Committee would like to thank all of the sponsors that helped make this event a success, and we invite you to view and acknowledge them by visiting www.racquetforthecure.com. On the site you'll be able to find a full sponsor list, a national calendar and event reports, plus a running archive of all the Denver results over the years, and a link to exclusive event photos by John Foust. Enjoy it online, and enjoy it in person – at a Racquet for the Cure event near you!

WPRO NAMES NEW COMMISSIONER

The Women's Professional Racquetball Organization (WPRO) has elected **Shannon Feaster**, a Maryland based marketing executive and long-time promoter of women's racquetball, to serve as its new Commissioner. Feaster is a world-class racquetball player and an AmPRO certified instructor at the professional level.



Shannon Feaster

2005-2006 WPRO TOUR RANKINGS:

*as of February 15, 2006

Rank	Name	Hometown	Points
1	Van Hees, Christie	Canada	983.00
2	Rajsich, Rhonda	Phoenix, AZ	789.00
3	Gudinas, Cheryl	Lisle, IL	615.53
4	Grisar, Angela	Chile	440.50
5	Walsh, Kristen	Salt Lake City, UT	353.50
6	Brown, Tammy	Boise, ID	290.00
7	Wachtel, Kerri	Cincinnati, OH	240.50
8	Moore, Diane	Griffith, IN	216.50
9	Kyzer, Brenda	Lexington, SC	182.00
10	Shattuck, Johanna	Denver, CO	192.50
11	Fenton, Laura	Overland Park, KS	172.50
12	Fisher, Adrienne	Centerville, OH	166.75
13	Hallander, Kersten	San Diego, CA	128.50
14	Fisher, Kelley	Centerville, OH	108.50
15	Acosta, Susy	Mexico	103.50
16	Salas, Samantha	Mexico	79.50

2005-2006 WPRO TOUR SCHEDULE:

September 8-11, 2005 – Rosarito, Mexico
Rosarito Beach Hotel Resort

October 20-23, 2005 – Albuquerque, NM
Midtown Athletic Club

November 16-20, 2005 – Memphis, TN
Choice Hotels US Open Racquetball Championships
The Racquet Club of Memphis

February 3-5, 2006 (Satellite Event) – Denver, CO
Racquet for the Cure benefiting The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
The Denver Athletic Club

February 10-12, 2006 (Satellite Event) – Sioux Falls, SD
28th Annual Lewis Drug Pro Am
Sioux Falls Family YMCA

March 23-26, 2006 – Miami, FL
7th Annual Great Balls of Fire Tournament
University of Miami

March 30-April 2 – Greensboro, NC
North Carolina Open
Pyramids Sportime Athletic Club

April 26-30, 2006 – Chicago, IL
WPRO Invitational/IRT Motorola Pro Nationals
Schaumburg Tennis Plus

May 11-14, 2006 – Boise, ID
Wilson/Piper Pub WPRO Pro Nationals
Idaho Athletic Club

For more information about the WPRO or to bring a tour stop to your area, visit www.ladiesproracquetball.com or contact Shannon Feaster, WPRO Commissioner – sfeasters@aol.com.



WOR Hawaiian Open Sostre-Hoff capture WOR Hawaiian Open

Photos Courtesy of Dave Knox



Pro Finalists: Robert Sostre, Marty Hogan, Rob Hoff, & Big Rod

Big Rod opened up the island hospitality last week as players hit Waikiki Beach for the annual Hawaiian Open at Fort Derassey. The tough short wall 3 wall courts right on the beach are one of the most beautiful places to play and tough! Fireballs were flying all day and into the night as 14 teams battled in the Pro Division with two of WOR's top



Mike Agustine got married during the tourney

ranked players Robert Sostre from NY & Rob Hoff from CA teamed up to capture the title with an exciting win over racquetball

legend Marty Hogan & Big Rod himself. On the court play is just a portion of this event as teams competed in the Pro, A, & Masters divisions while enjoying barbecued meals & on Sunday a trip to the Pro Bowl. This year even featured two weddings with Sostre & Mike Agustine getting married during the tourney!

RESULTS:

PRO: Robert Sostre-Robb Hoff DEF
Marty Hogan-Big Rod Felton

SEMIS: Scott Bauman-Peter Britos DEF
Matt Robinson-Lee Sands

A: Mike Shingler-Marshall Heilma DEF
Art Redford-Paul Martineau

SEMIS: Lee Friesius-Jim Nelson DEF
Ed Simon-Dave Brophy

MASTERS: Marty Hogan-Big Rod Felton
DEF Mike Garrity-Gary Martin

SEMIS: Dale Landrum-Scott Bauman DEF
John Whitty-Tom Thomas

WOR/PRO Kennex 2006 Superbowl Shootout

To most, mid October means plans for settling in for a long winter. Not in Huntington Beach, California where Outdoor Racquetball is thriving. The Pro Kennex Outdoor Classic was blessed with 75-80 degree weather. Yielding over 30 entrants in the pro division, spectators and players were treated to weekend of great barbecue and racquetball.

In typical outdoor fashion, fans were lined up in lawn chairs at the perimeter of the courts awaiting the next great match. In the pro singles division, a center line was placed in the middle of the court spanning from the service box to the back of the court. Much like the IRT tour in the early 1990's, the server had the opportunity to serve where he wanted upon entering the box, but every serve thereafter was to be kept within the opposing quadrant. This rule dramatically increased the number of rallies and negated the effect of big serves that have become commonplace in the outdoor game. The first quarterfinal match featured Jeff Johnson upsetting Son Nguyen. Craig "Clubber" Lane advanced past Kevin Booth and Jesus Ocana showed local indoor great Mike Orr the ins and outs of outdoor racquetball in a hard

fought win. Allen Kazem fell to Greg Solis in straight games. The semis began on Sunday with Greg Solis and Jesus "Zues" Ocana. For those that don't remember, Zues Ocana lost to long time indoor pro John Ellis 11-5 tiebreaker at the WOR Championships. Ocana was bringing the heat and backing it up with a tad bit of trash talking in his usual fashion that gathered fans. Solis seemed unaffected by the 'smack' of the ball and the mouth by Ocana and used his outdoor savvy to advance to the finals. The second semifinal featured long outdoor pro Craig Lane and Jeff Johnson. Johnson seemed a off his usual serve and rally style game and committed numerous unforced errors that Lane capitalized on to advance in straight games. After a five year hiatus from singles, Craig Lane found himself in the finals against his doubles partner Greg Solis. The doubles partners both came out serving big and bringing the typical outdoor heat needed to win, but again, Solis seemed unaffected by the power. The big serves were short lived for both players due to the newly implemented center service line. The quick hands and feet of Solis made a tough combination for Lane to overcome as he fell in straight games to Solis. With this win, Solis is well on his way to another title as the outdoor points champion.

In the pro doubles division, Solis and Lane were on a collision course with the newly formed team of Rob Hoff and Josh Tucker. Past national champs Solis and Lane found themselves facing the red hot team of Gary Martin and Pete Gauci. Martin and

Gauci, fresh off of an impressive upset over Jeff Johnson and Rick Sandello, had a ton of momentum coming into the match. The momentum was short lived after big serves and consistent re-kills by Solis and Lane seemed to stop Martin and Gauci cold. The past champs advanced in straight games, 15-1, 15-4. In a much more eventful semifinal, Hoff and Tucker faced Kevin Booth and Mike Peters. The always tough Booth and Peters came out in typical fashion by executing a well thought out game plan. The plan didn't last long as Tucker and Hoff began blasting forehands and hitting precise angles to off balance. The huge serve of Tucker and consistent play of Hoff was no match for Booth and Peters as the fell in straight games.

The finals featured a court consisting of Rob Hoff holding two outdoor national titles, Solis with four, Lane with five. Josh Tucker was not out of place though. The Missouri transplant has found his niche outdoor and was out to prove he belonged in the finals. The indoor touring wasted no time blasting serves in excess of 170 mph and kept both Lane and Solis on their heels. The game plan of Hoff and Tucker was apparent from the beginning. They team in the "T" formation the entire match and didn't deviate. This seemed frustrate Lane and Solis as they were unable to consistently put the ball away, thus making costly errors. The title went to Hoff and Tucker in straight games and the two pulled off the upset in convincing fashion.

WOR/PRO Kennex 2006 Superbowl Shootout Results...

Jesus Ocana & Mark Naylor captured their first Pro Doubles win in WOR competition at the Pro Kennex SuperBowl Shootout. Ocana/Naylor battled through a tough draw to defeat Tucker/Hoff

15-13 in the final. Many players from around SoCal participated in the event sponsored by Pro Kennex and sanctioned by WOR. 12 teams registered and only one would win! The day started out sunny and cool, but the heat turned up with strong showings from Greg Solis, Jason Geis, Gabe Medina, Mike Beltran, Son Nguyen, and Kevin Reynolds. Hollywood 1-Wall players Howard Austin and Franklin Wilson came down to play and represented well.

Participants enjoyed the games and made way for the margaritas to come in the afternoon.

Semi-1 - Jesus Ocana/Mark Naylor def. Greg Solis/Rick Sandello (15-11)

Semi-2 - Rob Hoff/Josh Tucker def. Gabe Medina/Mike Beltran (15-9)

Final - Mark Naylor/Jesus Ocana def Rob Hoff/Josh Tucker (15-13)



Jesus Ocana & Mark Naylor
1st Place Pro Doubles



DELAWARE AMATEUR RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION

STATE PRESIDENT: JEFF ZEGNA

Q. What would you say the key is to having a successful organization?

A. Our organization's strengths are leadership, teamwork, sense of community, and an unconditional passion for the sport. Our board members are enthusiastic and dedicated to promoting racquetball. And, having strong sponsors, which offsets many of our tournament costs and allows us to run competitive and fun tournaments for all participants.

Q. What is the number one complaint you hear as president?

A. Seeding! You can never make everyone happy, but we try our best at each tournament.

Q. What are your most successful programs?

A. To list a few I'd say:

Huge discounts to full-time students who play in our tournaments. We offer a 66% savings – 2 events and USAR membership for \$30.00.

Discounts to new tournament players. We offer a 30% savings – 2 events and USAR membership for \$60.00.

One-day events. We have received very positive feedback, especially from our out of state players. Many people like the fact that a tournament doesn't consume the whole weekend. And, this season, attendance has significantly increased for these events.

Obtaining sponsors. Both our state championships (Singles & Doubles) have tournament sponsors for the third consecutive season. We also have many food and merchandise sponsors and other cash sponsors, which allows DARA to offer "top notch" tournaments.

Public Relations. We have a very good relationship with the state newspaper, The News Journal. They promote all our tournaments, post results and also do feature articles on our sport. We also work directly with our neighboring state organizations (MD & PA), sharing and promoting each other's tournaments.

Website/E-newsletter. We are very fortunate to have some very talented and generous board members who have set-up a great website and E-newsletter, which continually provides information to the racquetball community.

Q. If you could share some advice to a struggling state what would it be?

A. You need to be proactive in promoting the sport. Make tournaments affordable and fun for all levels of play. And, obtaining dedicated sponsors, to allow you to run good tournaments and build a financially stable organization.

Q. What would you consider your state's greatest accomplishment during your tenure?

A. Our accomplishments are a by-product of our most successful programs listed above. These programs have increased awareness and participation of our great sport, and in-turn has made our tournaments more successful.

Q. What makes Delaware racquetball special?

A. Our organization is 21 years strong, and as a small state, you seem to know everybody in Delaware, so we're all like family. Nonetheless, we're ideally nestled between 3 major states, MD, PA and NJ. We have an excellent draw of players and always strive to run our tournaments in a very relaxed, personal environment, accommodating players' needs whenever possible. And, we always welcome players from outside Delaware as part of our "extended family".

Members of the Board:

Jeff Zegna – President

Dario Mas – Vice President

George Oughterson - Treasurer

Steve Weiler – State Commissioner

Steve Kowalski – Rules Commissioner

Sandy Caputo – Marketing Director

Ernie Lehman – Publicist

Richard Loring – Member at Large

Todd Fountain – Member at Large

Jeff is a New York native and moved to Delaware in 1997. He is married with two children and was recently featured (Dec 2005) in the *Delaware News Journal*. He enjoys travel and volunteers for the Special Olympics and Habitat for Humanity.

Membership Strength: 71 members as of Jan 31, 2006

Lifetime Members: Dario Mas

State Population: 783,600

Major Universities:

Delaware State University

Goldey-Beacom College

University of Delaware

Wesley College

Widener University- Delaware Campus

Wilmington College

Delaware was the first state to ratify the United States Constitution on Dec 7, 1787

The Lady Bug is the official state bug. In total area Delaware ranks 49th in the nation with 1,982 square miles.

"ROCK and ROLL" IT OUT at the 2006 IRT Motorola Pro Nationals

presented by Verizon Wireless Preview

The Motorola IRT Pro Nationals and USAR Adult Regional Championship is coming to the Schaumburg Tennis Plus club in Schaumburg Illinois April 26-30th. The event will feature the "made for TV" portable court and delayed telecast on The Tennis Channel. This is the sport's second "Grand Slam" event and will feature over 75 of the top men's professional players in the world. The event will also showcase the women stars of the WPRO in an exhibition style format to let the public know just how good these ladies really are! Also the event will be part of the USAR Regional series offering all skill and age divisions for every level of player. A junior division will be offered as well.

The event will feature a Rock and Roll theme with all the partying that you would expect from an event in Chicago. Come and party like a Rock Star with the pro's on Saturday night at Prairie Rock Brewery with live entertainment. Rock hard with local legends "Dirty Deeds", the best AC/DC cover band in the Midwest! Come and witness the thundering bass and laser light show on the main stadium court as your IRT and WPRO superstars come to rock your socks off. This is one event you will not want to miss.

This event will benefit the JDRF Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. The event raised over \$8000 last year and we expect to rise more this year with your help. Come and see the pro's play on Wednesday evening at the JDRF IRT Charity Pro am starting at 530pm. Your donations will be welcome at the pro am as well as with the silent auction.

The IRT matches will be interesting this year as the race for the year end number one ranking could very well be determined at this event. With the absence of three time US Open Champion Kane Waselenchuk in the first few events of the second half of the season and the rise of current number one Jack



Huczek this could make for an exciting finish to the IRT season. These two met two years ago in the last match of the season to determine who would end the season number one. Kane won that match and held the number one ranking until January of this year. Huczek has played stellar ball from the start of the second half and will be there battling again for this prestigious title. Jason Mannino

is lying in the weeds quietly and could very well be in the running for number one when this event arrives. Who could count out six-time number one Cliff Swain? If the draw is in his favor he could make his presence known, as he loves to play in front of the big crowds and always rises for big occasions. Mexico's superstar, Alvaro Beltran has taken the second half by storm but has not found the big shot when he needs to win his first major IRT event, maybe it will come here and Rocky Carson

will be there and making the effort to get the fans in Chicago behind him and recreate his stellar US Open performance falling just short of upsetting Waselenchuk in the semi's despite the loud chanting from the crowd "Rocky, Rocky, Rocky" Can he be the one to pull off the upset of the season? What about Shane

Vanderson, he has all the potential to make some noise at this event and very well could. This will probably be the last IRT event for the cagey veteran Mike Guidry and like Derek Robinson last year at this event Guidry will look to end his career on a high note in front of a full house in Chicago where he is a fan favorite.

Don't miss this rocking IRT event in Chicago April 26-30th. Get your tickets now to witness one of the greatest IRT events of the season The 2006 Motorola IRT Pro National and USAR Adult Regional Racquetball Championships.

For event details visit the official web page www.irt-pronationals.com or enter online at www.usra.org



Get with the Program

GET WITH THE PROGRAM



BY CONNIE MARTIN

High School Racquetball

After reading Jim Hiser's 'From The Top' in the Jan/Feb issue of 'Racquetball', I knew what I had to write this months article on.

In case you forgot to read it or can't remember the context, it was about how two states Missouri and Oregon have distinguished themselves through the development of their junior program and how one very dedicated volunteer, Gary Kerwood in Oregon, was initially responsible for the success of Oregon's program. Jim is so right! Years ago Gary tried to get me to get our Schools on the Eastside of Portland involved in the High School Racquetball League Program.

I really did not think it was a good idea. At Cascade Athletic Clubs, we were (and still are) an adult oriented club, with kids programs. Since the kids hardly pay anything to the clubs to practice there and the HS League wants the clubs to volunteer their courts for the Saturday League Matches where 50-100 kids infiltrate each club for 6 hours, we were really apprehensive about becoming involved. Little by little with his coaxing (he is a lawyer), Cascade Athletic Clubs (CAC), my club and some of it's Member volunteers became involved with getting some of the local High Schools to join the HS League and practices were held at the club a couple of afternoons a week and CAC joined the other clubs in hosting the league matches. I still wasn't convinced it was in the best interest of the clubs to do this but 'Gary' was very convincing and he, like Jim, was right!!!

One of the best things Cascade Athletic Clubs (and people like me) could have done is get involved with the Oregon High School League. We host 3 High Schools out of the Club from November through February with anywhere between 30-40 kids total.

Five years ago, the majority of the kids were non-members, so they paid in addition to the league fee, \$100 for a 4 month membership. Now, the majority of the kids, along with their parents are Members (bonus)! The practice times are 3-5 in the afternoons.

At other clubs, they run practices after school as well as 8 at night and on the weekends when the courts aren't as busy.

All the coaches are volunteer (including myself and our Racquetball Director Brian Ancheta).

The team I coach -Gresham High School (GHS)- includes a volunteer staff of parents like Pat Montgomery and myself who have kids on the team and avid Players like Jim Tumbaga and GHS Teacher (and avid player) Cathy Gibbs, who take a few hours each week to work with the kids and then spend their Saturdays at the League Matches and then watching, cheering, and consoling the kids for about 40 hours during the HS State Racquetball Championships.

Why am I telling you this? Because EVERYONE and ANYONE who is involved in the sport of racquetball whether you own a club, work at a club, are a player in the club should seriously consider starting a High School Program in your state. It does not have to be this big program to begin with. Oregon started out 12 years ago with 5 Kids from two high schools. You have heard many times, 'the kids are the future of your sport'. This is so true with the High School League. Take GHS Player, Kevin Martos. Started playing in High School then came to work for my Club after graduating from HS and even helped coach one year. And there is Kaylee Phenning, a graduate from Sprague HS who did not pick up the sport either until High School. I think she did it because there were boys on the team. This is unique to High School Sports since boys and girls are on the same team and can even compete together in Mixed Doubles. She now plays for Oregon State and also plays in the Oregon Racquetball Association adult tournaments where she has become one of the top Womens Open players in Oregon.

This year the Oregon High School League had 330 kids from 43 High School teams involved in the program and next week (March 2nd-5th) 210 Oregon kids will compete in the High School Nationals in Salem, Oregon along with other kids from across the US. The majority of these kids are not your 'Varsity' athlete. They are just ordinary kids learning how to play and enjoy the game. Some of them develop into the top Junior Players in the world such as Katie Ferguson who won the 2005 Oregon State Singles and Doubles (with twin sister Elizabeth) Championships and then went on to win the National Title the same year. Then there are the majority of your players who would not have made the Varsity Team, if you cut players. Kids compete in the Gold, Blue, Red, White system of play and all of them earn points for their team, no matter how good or 'not' good' they are.

John Ferguson who has been involved in the Oregon HS League for many years as commissioner and volunteer says this about the HS League, "This is really the only sport that you can start as a Freshman (or any year) having never played before and make a contribution to the team and be on the varsity team. No kids are cut in the program, you want to play, you play (though in Oregon you need to maintain grades what ever the school requires for athletic eligibility).

Boys and girls get to compete together at the same time and same venue and they can even play mixed doubles together."

High School Racquetball also has a National Championships that every high schooler can compete in. How many kids in any sport or during their life time ever get to compete in a National Championship!!! Some schools let you letter, some let you become a club, each school and district will be different. It took Beaverton School District 5 years to become a lettered sport and PE credit toward graduation even though they have won the Oregon State HS Team Championships most years. Dave Azuma, National Coach of the year last year has 55 kids from Beaverton High School participate in the league.

I have coached the Gresham High School Team for 3 years now. We went from 21st 3 years ago to 5th place overall this year with the kids earning 22 medals between them.

I lose 9 Seniors this year including my son Brandon, who also only started playing when he was a Freshman. But, he is going to Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham next year and guess what? He and some of the other graduates are starting a college team.

I already polled the other GHS coaches and they will be all be back next year, including me. Even though none of us will have kids on the team next year, we still feel like they are our kids and the future of our club and racquetball.

If you are interested in starting a HS Team or league and want to know how to best go about it, John Ferguson said to e-mail him and he will be glad to help you out. Johns e-mail address is: ferguson85@comcast.net

Reach Connie at
clpsportscreations@verizon.net



Gresham High School Racquetball Team

Left to Right: (Standing) Andrew Lewis, Derek O'Guin, Mike Manwell, Guy White, Brian Coffeen, Mike Brush, Nick Norris, James Crawford and Coaches Pat Montgomery and Jim Tumbaga. (Kneeling) Coach Connie Martin, Sam Montgomery, Brandon Jordan-Lamb, Hilary Munger, Blake Ingram, Kayanna Cecchi, Scott Queen. (Sitting) Jeff Dukleth, Kelsey Hinds, Brandon Martin, and Alex Savory. (Missing: Mallory Kuiawa)

MOTORAZR

Thin is in, and now it's out of control. Get hi-speed V CAST[®] downloads on-the-go. Watch news, weather, sports and prime-time TV in the palm of your hand (which also holds a 1.3 megapixel camera).

Ready? Set? It's already here. The new Motorola RAZR V3c. hellomoto.com/V3c

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RAZRWIRE

Look sharp. It's style, times two. This sleek Bluetooth[®]-enabled eyewear goes just so with the super-slim profile of the Motorola RAZR. What can we say? They were made for each other. Literally.



Special
Womens
Divisions and
Events



THE FINALS

NATIONAL SINGLES



Downtown YMCA Houston, Texas

May 24-29, 2006

Event Sponsor:



Presented by:



Entry
Form



The Player's Event

The "Finals" is the only national championship for singles competition in open, skill, age group and combined divisions. On top of a full week's worth of play in this event, you'll enjoy special activities like these...

Wednesday

PARTY IN THE PARK BAR — Hyatt Regency

Thursday

LADIES NIGHT OUT! — Hyatt Regency

Reception for all female participants

Friday

VIP AND IRT RECEPTION — Hyatt Regency



An invitation-only reception to honor individuals who have won a National title within the past year as well as IRT sponsors, tournament directors, players and supporters.

CASH WHIRLWIND AND TEXAS HOLD 'EM POKER — Hyatt Regency



Each player will receive a small "bank" to spend on Craps, Blackjack, Roulette and the One-armed Bandits! At the close of the evening, you'll be able to bid on a

selection of grand prizes. Also special tables will be available for Texas Hold 'em Poker Sponsored by Penn.

And all week long...

Enjoy downtown nightlife at over 100 restaurants and nightclubs – all in walking distance of the Hyatt.

Saturday

A Racquetball Night to Remember

The Hyatt Grand Ballroom will host a patriotic celebration, featuring entertainment and awards to recognize Hall of Famers, Athletes of the Year, and other honorees. Cocktail attire, please...no athletic wear will be permitted!

Sunday - Open Finals

Keep your afternoon and early evening free to watch the U.S. Team Qualifier at the YMCA! Men's and Women's Open winners will be appointed to the U.S. Team squad that will compete at the World Championships in August.

Sunday

FAREWELL IN THE BAR — Park Bar Hyatt

Join fellow players and fans for the last party night of THE FINALS.

Monday

All remaining division finals will be played throughout the day (except the U.S. Team Qualifying OPEN divisions, played on Sunday).

U.S. Team Auction

There will be an auction to benefit the U.S. Team held throughout the event. Anyone willing to donate an auction item please contact Heather at 719-635-5396 x 129

Event Sponsor:



Members Only

This National Event is hosted for USA Racquetball members only. A USA Racquetball membership is required of all participants, and entrants may join online at www.usaracquetball.com, include fees with entry, or must be able to present a current membership card, receipt, or cancelled check indicating recent enrollment as proof of membership.

The Form

You'll find the entry form on pages 7 & 8 of this printed piece. You must submit both completed pages with fees to be entered into the draw. If you are faxing your entry, be sure to include both pages. Fax entries require an extra fee.

The Fees

ENTRY: \$92.00 First event (includes \$10 referee fee), \$47.00 second event. Players may enter two events. ■ **LATE FEES:** Entries received after the deadline will be surcharged an additional \$15.00 late fee. No payments will be accepted on-site at the registration desk. ■ **PROCESSING:** Telephone/Fax entries will be accepted through the deadline with an \$10.00 service charge and pre-payment with Visa/Mastercard @ 719/635-5396.

Entry Deadline

Wed., MAY 10, postmarked no later than Friday, MAY 5. Only pre-paid entries are placed into the draw; any withdrawals will be subject to a \$15.00 fax fee; no refunds will be issued after the deadline date, regardless of cause (including unforeseen injury or illness). **Confirmation:** Players may verify their entry and divisions by referencing an online participants list (updated regularly through the entry deadline), linked through "Marquee Event" at usaracquetball.com. **Registration:** Players must register at the YMCA prior to their first match, during these hours: Tues. 5 pm to 9 pm, Wed. 8 am to 9 pm, Thurs. 8 am to 9 pm, Fri. 8 am to 8 pm.

Downtown YMCA Access

All players must have a bag tag to be admitted into the YMCA racquetball area, and to complete their registration in the Hospitality Park. Players may register online and pick up their bag tag – and one free guest pass per entrant – at the USA Racquetball desk located just inside the entrance to the YMCA. Additional guest passes can be purchased from the YMCA for \$5.00 per day or \$15.00 for the entire week.

Event Administration

USA Racquetball @ 719/635-5396, ext. 129.

Register on-line

www.usaracquetball.com



Travel & Lodging

The U.S. Olympic Committee Travel Desk and United Airlines join USA Racquetball to offer the lowest possible United Airfares to national events.

For reservations, phone United's U.S. Olympic Travel Desk, toll-free, at **800/841-0460** between 8:30 am and 8:00 pm EST weekdays. Reference the USA Racquetball account number **565 EF** to receive United's lowest fare!

Ground Transportation

Bus, shuttle, taxi and limousine services are available from both Houston airports (you must make your own arrangements on arrival). Pricing varies by airport and service (between \$15.00-\$40.00). Hertz is the event's official car rental sponsor — make your reservations by calling 800-654-2240 and referencing meeting 962102 PC for your special rate.



Hyatt Regency Houston

1200 Louisiana (1 block from YMCA).
Rate: \$91.00 per night for up to four guests per room. For reservations, call 713/654-1234 and mention National Singles or online at <http://houstonregency.hyatt.com/groupbooking/usra>



OFFICIAL RULES

will govern competition, including the mandatory use of protective lensed eyewear tested to ASTM F803 or CSA impact standards (including prescription frames and lenses).

It is the player's responsibility to make certain that their eyewear conforms with the standard specified in Rule 2.5(a).

Find a listing of ASTM eyeguards online at www.usra.org > "index" > "eyeguards".

Citizenship & Age Requirements:

Only U.S. citizens may compete in the U.S. Team Qualifying Open divisions; all other age & skill divisions are open to U.S. citizens and residents. For age division competition, players must meet the proper age requirement as of the first day of competition (May 24, 2006). International players may only enter the international division.

Drug Testing:

The USRA will be using the U.S. Olympic Committee's Drug Testing Program at this event. Testing will be performed on U.S. team-qualifier/ Open division players only. For more information about specific medications call the USOC Drug Hotline at 1-800-233-0393.

Qualifiers & Certifications

Regionals:

All players must have competed – in any division – at a recognized Regional Qualifier to be eligible to compete in "The Finals". Any legitimate waivers of qualifying competition must have been directed to – and approved by – the USA Racquetball Headquarters prior to the scheduled regional weekend. Individual regional tournament directors may not approve exclusions from play, for any reason. National waiver fee of \$100 must be included with entry fee.

Skill Division Certification:

Skill level entrants (to A, B, C, D divisions) must be AmPRO certified at that level, OR have played in the same division at the mandatory regional qualifier, OR be approved by the state director or representative as being legitimately competitive in the entered skill division at the national level. Tournament directors will use these benchmarks to determine eligibility for skill competition, and reserve the right to re-classify or disqualify players when/if they are improperly placed.

Women's Divisions:

All women's divisions (except open) will be offered in the Olympic format. This means that all players in an age bracket (eg 45, 45A, 45B 45C,) will be put in the same starting bracket. All first round losers go to the B division and second round losers go to the A divisions. Also all second round losers from the first round losers go to the C division.

NOTE: Players in Age+Skill must meet the same criteria for corresponding skill levels in "Age+A/B/C" divisions.

THE FINALS

NATIONAL SINGLES

Official Ball:
ProPenn





Opening Rounds

Be prepared to play at 8:00 am on the days shown next to your entered divisions. These estimates are provided for your travel planning purposes only — actual starting dates/times may change (possibly later, but no earlier) according to the final number of players entered in each draw.

U.S. Team Qualifier

OPEN

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

International Division

OPEN

Men: Friday • Women: Friday

U.S. National Divisions

AGE: 24-

Men: Thursday • Women: Friday

AGE: 25+

Men: Wednesday • Women: Friday

AGE: 30+

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

AGE: 35+

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

AGE: 40+

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

AGE: 45+

Men: Wednesday • Women: Friday

AGE: 50+

Men: Wednesday • Women: Friday

AGE: 55+

Men: Thursday • Women: Friday

AGE: 60+

Men: Thursday • Women: Friday

AGE: 65+

Men: Friday • Women: Friday

AGE: 70+

Men: Friday • Women: Saturday

AGE: 75+

Men: Friday • Women: Saturday

AGE: 80+

Men: Friday • Women: Saturday

AGE: 85+

Men: Friday • Women: Saturday

Skill: Elite

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

For Starting Times Call:

713-758-9181

Individual starting times will be available ONLY during the hours shown (Central):

Monday, May 22 • 5:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Tuesday, May 23 • 9:00 am - 9:00 pm

Wednesday, May 24 • 9:00 am - 12:00 noon

Skill: A

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Skill: B

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Skill: C

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Skill: D

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Age: 24- Skill: A

Men: Thursday • Women: Thursday

Age: 24- Skill: B

Men: Thursday • Women: Thursday

Age: 24- Skill: C

Men: Thursday • Women: Thursday

Age: 25+ Skill: A

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Age: 25+ Skill: B

Men: Thursday • Women: Thursday

Age: 25+ Skill: C

Men: Thursday • Women: Thursday

Age: 30+ Skill: A

Men: Wednesday • Women: Friday

Age: 30+ Skill: B

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Age: 30+ Skill: C

Men: Thursday • Women: Thursday

Age: 35+ Skill: A

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Age: 35+ Skill: B

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Age: 35+ Skill: C

Men: Thursday • Women: Thursday

Age: 40+ Skill: A

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Age: 40+ Skill: B

Men: Wednesday • Women: Thursday

Age: 40+ Skill: C

Men: Thursday • Women: Thursday

Age: 45+ Skill: A

Men: Wednesday • Women: Friday

Age: 45+ Skill: B

Men: Wednesday • Women: Friday

Age: 45+ Skill: C

Men: Thursday • Women: Friday

Age: 50+ Skill: A

Men: Wednesday • Women: Friday

Age: 50+ Skill: B

Men: Thursday • Women: Friday

Age: 50+ Skill: C

Men: Thursday • Women: Friday

Age: 55+ Skill: A

Men: Thursday • Women: Friday

Age: 55+ Skill: B

Men: Friday • Women: Friday

Age: 55+ Skill: C

Men: Friday • Women: Friday

Age: 60+ Skill: A

Men: Friday • Women: Saturday

Age: 60+ Skill: B

Men: Friday • Women: Saturday

Age: 60+ Skill: C

Men: Friday • Women: Saturday

Entry Form: Part 1

If you are FAXING your entry, be sure to include BOTH sides of this page in your transmission! Fax: 719/635-0685 or enter on line at www.usaracquetball.com

Please PRINT

Name _____ Gender: M | F

Birthdate _____ Age _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone (Day) _____ (Eve) _____

Employer _____ Occupation _____

Regional (required) _____ Division(s) _____

FOR SEEDING — Please indicate your finish in these events:

2005 National Singles

Finish _____ Div _____

2006 Regional Qualifier

Finish _____ Div _____

2005 U.S. OPEN

Finish _____ Div _____

2005-06 NMRA / WSMRA

Finish _____ Div _____

2006 State Championship

Finish _____ Div _____

WAIVER I hereby, for myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators, waive and release any and all rights and claims that I may have against the USA Racquetball, Hyatt, Ektelon, Downtown YMCA, Penn Racquet Sports, and all other event sponsors or their respective agents for any and all injuries. I also acknowledge the potential risk of eye injury during competition, and can provide certification in writing that my protective eyeguards (including prescription frames/lenses) conform with all standards specified in USA Racquetball Rule 2.5(a). By registering to compete in this event, I consent to be subject to drug testing as administered according to the USA Racquetball/USOC guidelines, and release all rights to the use of event photographs in which my image appears.

Participant Signature & Date

REQUIRED SKILL LEVEL VERIFICATION Please indicate below your eligibility for competition in the skill level you have chosen. This information will be verified and re-classification may take place if deemed appropriate by the Tournament Director.

- I competed in my regional at this level, as shown above.
- I have been AmPRO certified at this level by:

AmPRO Certified Instructor (name required)

- I have been approved for participation at this level by the state _____ director or designated representative shown below:

(name required)

ALL players must have pre-qualified by competing in any division at a regional event. See "Qualifiers & Certifications."

U.S. NATIONAL TEAM QUALIFIER

- OPEN Division (unrestricted)

INTERNATIONAL DIVISION (no qualification required)

- Open Division for all foreign players & U.S. players who want to compete.

U.S. National Divisions

AGE SKILL (one only)**

<input type="checkbox"/> 24-	<input type="checkbox"/> Elite (state open)
<input type="checkbox"/> 25+	<input type="checkbox"/> A
<input type="checkbox"/> 30+	<input type="checkbox"/> B
<input type="checkbox"/> 35+	<input type="checkbox"/> C
<input type="checkbox"/> 40+	<input type="checkbox"/> D
<input type="checkbox"/> 45+	
<input type="checkbox"/> 50+	AGE + SKILL**
<input type="checkbox"/> 55+	24- <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C
<input type="checkbox"/> 60+	25+ <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C
<input type="checkbox"/> 65+	30+ <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C
<input type="checkbox"/> 70+	35+ <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C
<input type="checkbox"/> 75+	40+ <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C
<input type="checkbox"/> 80+	45+ <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C
<input type="checkbox"/> 85+	50+ <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C
	55+ <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C
	60+ <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C

* Player may enter only one of the divisions shown in RED, and must be approved to compete at that skill level (see "Qualifiers & Certifications").

** Players must be approved at the skill level chosen along with their age (see "Qualifiers & Certifications").

Draws of seven players, or less, will be conducted in either a round-robin or double-elimination format. First-round losers may sign up for only ONE consolation round.

Don't forget to complete the OTHER side of this page!

Fees & Payment: Part II

REVISED TEAM QUALIFYING PROCEDURES [As of March 1, 2005]

USA RACQUETBALL MEMBERSHIP

Current Membership # Exp. _____
USRA Membership.....(\$30.00) \$ _____

FIRST EVENT.....(\$92.00) \$ _____

Each entrant will be provided AM hospitality, plus nightly social events and Saturday banquet. Entrants will also receive a high-quality souvenir item. A portion of all first-event entry fees will be donated to "Friends of Children" a local charitable foundation for abused children.

SECOND EVENT(\$47.00) \$ _____

Late Fee(\$15.00) \$ _____

Telephone & Fax Entry fee ...(\$10.00) \$ _____

Guest Package(\$85.00) \$ _____

All special events/parties will require a ticket for admission, and a guest pass will be needed to enter the host club. Guest package includes tournament shirt & souvenir, daily hospitality passes, tickets to all scheduled social events, Banquet and tournament guest pass. \$125.00 value.

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Regional Waiver fee (all waivers) \$100.00

Tax deductible donation
to Olympic Dream..... \$ _____

TOTAL DUE:..... \$ _____

Use your USA Racquetball MBNA credit card to charge your entry, and receive an additional 10% off your fees. Only USA Racquetball MBNA cards receive this discount!

MC/Visa _____

Exp. _____ MBNA _____

Name on Card _____

Signature _____

Entries are NOT accepted without pre-payment and required signatures. Surcharges may include: \$25.00 for returned checks and \$10.00 for declined credit cards.

U.S. Team Qualifying

In order to earn an appointment to the U.S. National Team, benchmark performances must be reached at selected qualifiers. Presently the team is comprised of one top professional from each tour (1 each, IRT/male & LPRA/female = 2); the top-four (4) finishers from the U.S. National Singles Championships (4 each, male & female = 8); finalists from the U.S. National Doubles Championships (4 teams, 2 each, male & female = 8); and Intercollegiate National champions (1 each, male & female = 2). By reaching these benchmarks, individuals are appointed to the U.S. Team for a term of one year, and are then added to a pool of athletes to compete at international events.

**MAIL COMPLETED ENTRY AND
FEES TO: "THE FINALS"**
1685 West Uintah
Colorado Springs, CO • 80904-
2906 [Fax: 719/635-0685]
**Entries must be received by
WEDNESDAY, MAY 10**

 EKTelon

 Propenn®

 HOUSTON

 HYATT
REGENCY
HOUSTON
IN THE CENTER OF DOWNTOWN

 YMCA

Hall of Fame

The USA Racquetball Hall of Fame is maintained to recognize and honor those athletes and contributors who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in competition or in the development, leadership, and advancement of the sport. The award is based upon years of consistent excellence in one or more of the following areas:

Competitor: On either an amateur or professional level, the person has influenced other competitors with his or her performance through any or all the following: high performance standards; sportsmanship and fair play; competitive techniques; persistent and inspirational leadership.

Contributor: The person has made a significant and noteworthy contribution that has left a lasting, positive effect on the advancement of the sport. The person's efforts have been devoted to the sport and organization of racquetball.



2006 Hall of Fame Inductees

Mary Lyons & Susan Pfahler – Amateur Players

In both Open and Age Division competition, the championship record of doubles team Mary Lyons and Susan (Morgan) Pfahler is unmatched in racquetball history. No other pairing, male or female, can claim 17 doubles titles. Their run began in 1984 with Women's 25+ titles and a bronze medal in Women's Open. Over the next two decades, they accumulated a total of 17 gold medals, including a double gold in 1992 (Women's Open and Women's 35+) followed by five consecutive wins in the Women's 35+ division from 1993 to 1997. From 1997 to 2005, they captured their Age Division title each year. Both players have earned the respect and admiration of their peers through long and outstanding performance, good sportsmanship, teamwork and fair play.



Connie Martin – Contributor

Connie Martin has been involved in the teaching and programming of racquetball since 1975. She was the founder and executive director of PARI (Professional Association of Racquetball Instructors), now known as AMPRO. She has published numerous books on racquetball programming including the original PARI teaching manual and the YMCA training program for Junior Racquetball. Connie was also the commissioner of the Oregon Racquetball Association for 5 years, coach of the Gresham High School Racquetball Team, and recipient of the first International Racquetball and Health Association (IRHA) award for outstanding service. Additionally, Connie contributed as a member of the Board of Directors for the Police Arbitration League (PAL) in her community.



THE FOREHAND STROKE compared to THROWING A BALL SIDEARM

BY SUDSY MONCHIK



Presented By:



Well, baseball season is upon us with spring training in full swing.

In one of the past issues, October/November 2004, I compared my “Magical Forehand Stroke with the Baseball Swing”...as they are SO similar. I received such positive feedback that I thought I would use another helpful analogy to reinforce your forehand stroke. Today I want to compare my “Magical Forehand with Throwing a Ball Sidearm”. These analogies that I use at my camps make it easier for people to understand the concept we are trying to teach. I will be going into depth and break down both and you will see just how similar the mechanics of both really are.

The reason I am focusing on my forehand stroke is it is one of the most important parts of building a solid foundation to your game ...see our “Building Your Racquetball Dream House” video for live details. There is no substitute for a consistent, powerful and explosive forehand...like mine. Let’s take a closer look and compare:

TRICK 1

Ready Position

Forehand

Square to Side Wall
Shoulders Level
Knees Bent
Hitting Arm Up
Non-Hitting Arm used
for balance

Sidearm

Square to Side Wall
Shoulders Level
Knees Slightly Bent
Throwing Arm Up
Non-Hitting Arm used
for balance



TRICK 2

Step & Swing

Forehand

Step toward Front Wall
Hips Begin to Open
Drive off Back Leg
Hitting Arm starts to drop
leading with the Elbow

Sidearm

Step toward Front Wall
Hips Begin to Open
Drive off Back Leg
Throwing Arm starts to drop
leading with the Elbow



MAGIC SHOW

TRICK 3

Contact Point

Forehand

Back Foot Pivots
Hips Completely Open
Hitting Arm Fully Extended
Non-Hitting Arm Moves



Sidearm

Back Foot Pivots
Hips Completely Open
Throwing Arm Fully Extended
Non-Hitting Arm Moves



TRICK 4

Follow Through

Forehand

Chest Facing the Front Wall
Belly Button Facing Front Wall

Hitting Arm all the Way
Racquet Pointing to Back Wall

Non-Hitting Arm Completely
Through



Sidearm

Chest Facing the Front Wall
Belly Button Facing Front Wall

Hitting Arm all the Way
Racquet Pointing to Back Wall

Non-Hitting Arm Completely
Through



Now you have my magical "Forehand Stroke compared to Throwing a Ball Side Arm" ...they say a picture is worth a thousand words. Remember the forehand stroke is part of building a solid foundation. So if you are a baseball or softball nut this little exercise of comparing the two motions can make your forehand a weapon in your game. In this issue I decided to discuss the forehand stroke, but have no fear in the next issue I will discuss my magical backhand using an analogy as well. This will round out your solid foundation and make you a strong player from both sides...a must in order to move up in level. Start with the forehand this month and make it as consistent, powerful and as explosive as mine and you will be on your way to that next level you've always dreamed of.

Hope to see you at one of our camps for live personal instruction or the next best thing buy our video if you can't make a camp at this time. Go to www.FranDavisRacquetball.com for details on both.

Backhand Drive Serve

This month's topic comes from a request at a recent Ektelon demo to explain my motion during a Backhand Drive Serve for the magazine. Funny thing is that I rarely use this serve during IRT tournament play. As you'll see, my set up position for the serve is very unique thus being the reason for the lack of confidence in using this serve against the best of the IRT. Or the second tier players on the IRT. However, this style of Backhand Drive Serve can be effective at the Beginner to Open level. It's crazy and fun to hit well, so give it a try. The photo series is for right hand players but you can do the same as a lefty.

PHOTO 1 & 2:

Crazy set up position, eh? I like to face my opponent in a low athletic stance; backhand grip racquet ready position similar to my return of serve position only the ball is in my hand.



Obviously this service set up position is odd and will be initially unexpected by your opponent. The whole serve is based on deception and precision contact so feel free to use a little movement in this stance to distract your opponent.

PHOTO 3 & 4: Take a step back with your left foot towards the front wall. You will begin to pivot with this first step towards the front wall. Get the racquet into early racquet prep for your backhand serve making sure not to take it too high into the air.



5

PHOTO 5: Drop step with the right leg towards the front with your toss landing just off your front right foot. Stay low with your backhand swing staying close to your body as the swing is made. You're preparing to hit either a strong slice/push down the line or snapping your wrist to go cross-court. The ball toss should allow you to make contact in front of your body, hiding the shot momentarily. That is the goal of the serve along with hitting the shot at the correct angle.

6

PHOTO 6: At contact point the racquet should be tear shaped instead of flat because of the spin you're applying to the serve down the line. The racquet will be flatter for the cross-court drive serve. You can also snap the wrist even more for the z-serve to the left corner.

PHOTO 7 & 8: Notice the follow thru is very abbreviated due to the spin. Use your left foot to push off and quickly shuffle into center court position. Your goal for the drive-serve to the left is a well-concealed serve that tails off to the left corner with the spin applied. The drive to the right is hit with no spin but should continue to be as deceiving as the drive to the left.

Have fun with this serve and use it to change up the game a little.

7.

You may just find out that the motion of my backhand drive serve will give you the momentum to hit effective drives from the backhand. You don't see many good backhand drives so give it a try!!

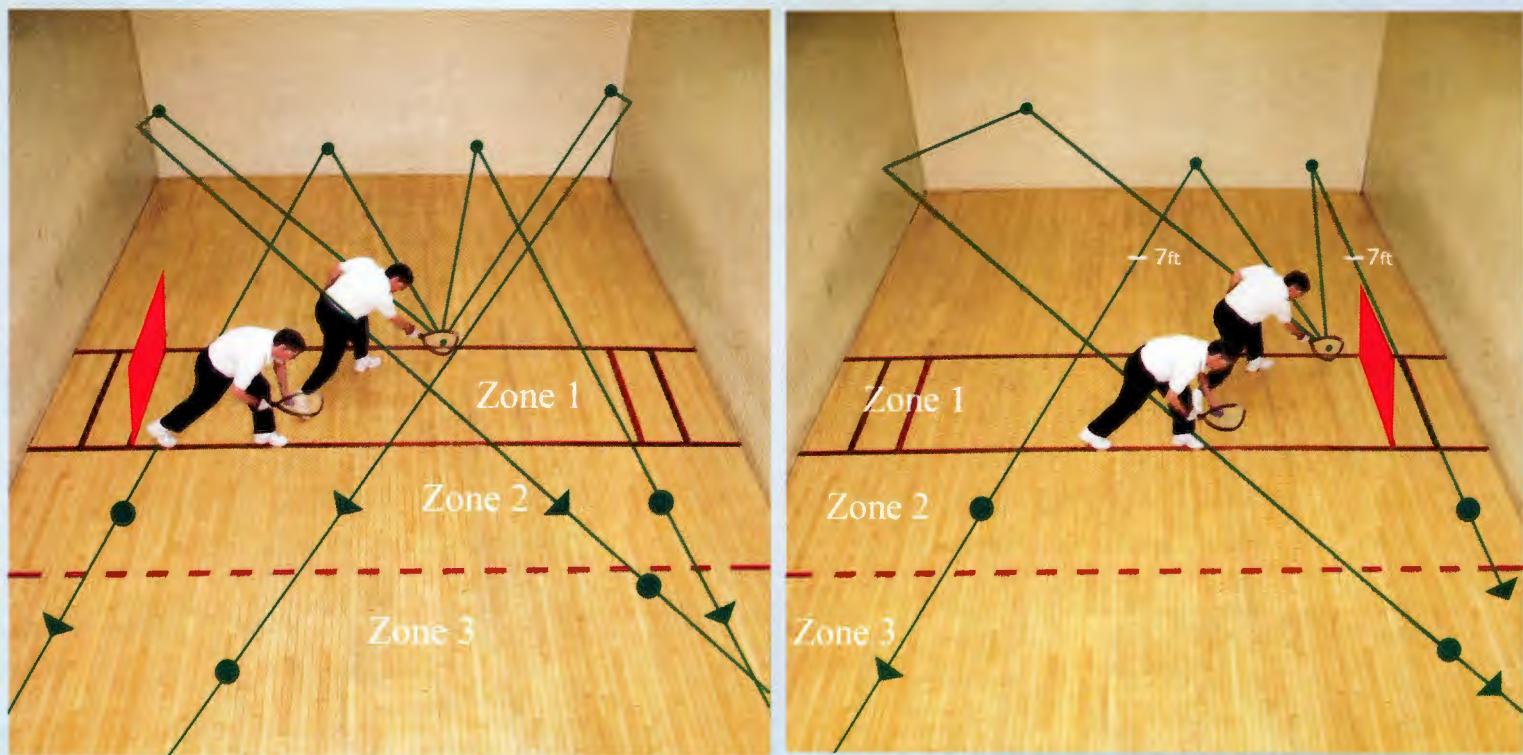


STRANDEMO'S *strategies*



Strandemo on Racquetball

Lets do a quick review of the Jan.-Feb. issue before we start this instructional article. Hopefully you had an opportunity to read, practice and incorporate a **good 2 step serving motion** into your low drive and hard Z serves. The reason last issue's homework was important is because we now want to take those individual serving skills and learn to hit different hard serves (low drive and hard Z's) off exactly the same motion from 2 different locations in the service box. When you become efficient with this serving strategy, you can honestly start making your opponent's receiving life pretty difficult.

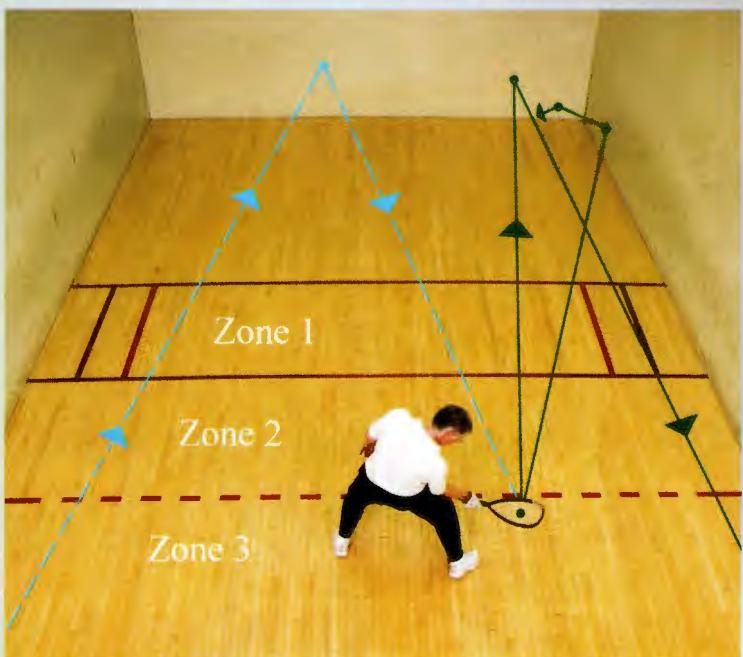
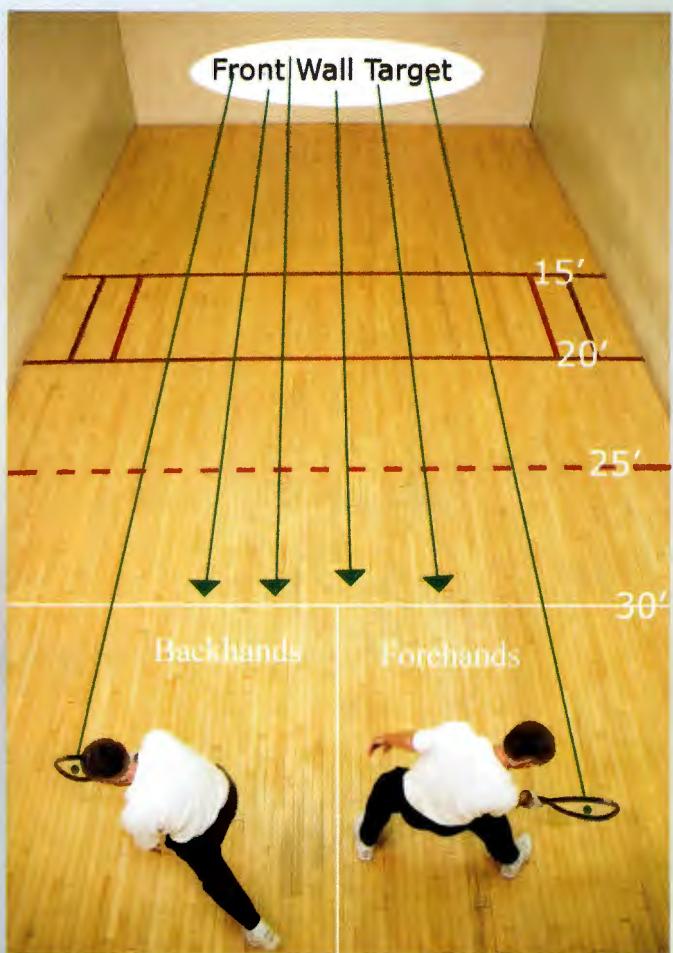
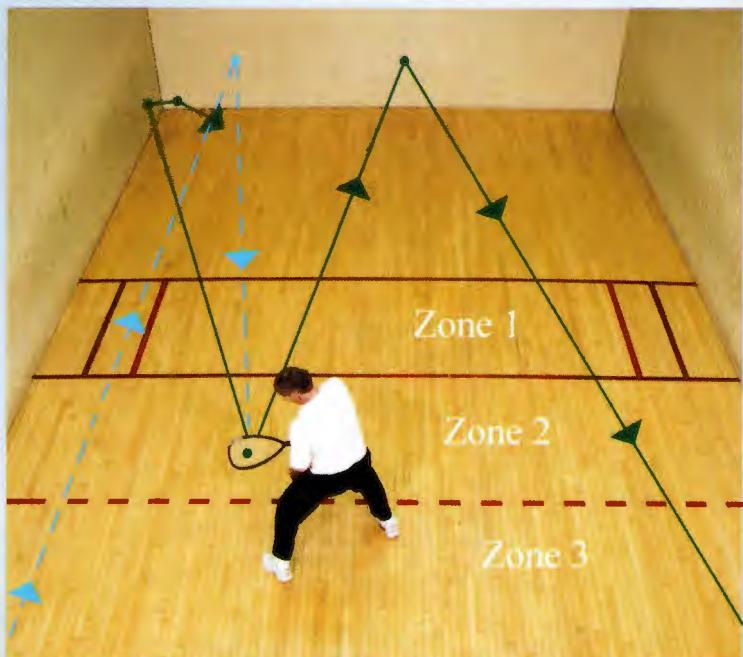


This photo shows I'm starting inside the 2nd red vertical plane and I'm striding at a 45 degree angle into the middle of the service box to make ball contact. From this contact spot of about 2-3 boards to the right of center; **I can hit 4 legitimate hard serves to both back corners**. There just isn't enough space in this 2 page article to convey the mental strategy of how to mix and match these serves for the greatest productivity, but I'll go into detail about how to strategize your low drive and hard Z serving in this article's instructional DVD.

Here, I'm starting near the middle and taking the same 2 step serving motion to get **near but not over the 2nd red vertical plane**. From this ball contact position I can drive a low drive down the right wall and put incredible pressure on a right-hander's forehead or a left-hander's backhand. Once I can establish a serving pattern that gets my opponent to start leaning right, the low drive to the back left corner becomes highly effective. Following that same thinking, once I get him leaning left to cover the low drive, and hard Z snapped to the back right corner really catches him off guard. I'll expand on how to package these serves and the mental thinking behind them in this article's instructional DVD.



After you forcefully stride into your serve with your left leg, you then use your right foot as a brake leg, so your body momentum doesn't carry you too far forward after ball contact. You next use your right foot as a pivot and pull your left leg around and start your shuffle step back to zone 2-3.



These 2 pictures show your proper offensive shot selection after your opponent leaves up his offensive return from the back left corner. Notice the hitter; hitting from an open stance in zone 3. **This is a correct hitting position, this is a realistic hitting position and this is the hitting stance you must use when the return comes quickly to you in zone 2-3 and you have little (to no) time to execute your scoring attempt.**

To order this instructional video select a DVD or VHS
Price is \$24.95 (US Dollars). Postage paid in U.S., Canada and Mexico.
Off shore is \$27.95 (U.S. Dollars).
Website: www.Strandemosports.com
Phone: (858) 759-6091
Postal: Strandemo Sports TM
P.O. Box 720608
San Diego, CA 92172

"30 Second Drill"

The 30 second drill is the best drill I can recommend for all players. Learn to rally back and forth with yourself; prepping your body and mind for your opponent's left-up shots. Do the drill behind the 30' line, divide the center in half; half-backhands, half-forehands. Let the ball bounce once or twice before it gets to you. Make ball contact on the front wall between 2'-6' and try not to let the ball come off the back wall. In this issue's instructional DVD, I'll demonstrate and explain in detail how the drill works.

WHAT'S THE CALL?

BY OTTO DIETRICH • USA RACQUETBALL NATIONAL RULES COMMISSIONER



In a recent email I received, **Jeff Kringle** stated “*You helped me a couple years ago with a rules question about hinders in a “cut throat” situation. I did, as you suggested, purchase the Official Rules of Racquetball. However, today’s conundrum is not covered in the booklet. In doubles, a player has a clear shot, but fails to hit the ball. So, then his partner tries to hit the ball, but is hindered in his attempt. I dismissed the partner’s hinder call using the rationale that, in doubles, a team gets only one clear shot. A second clear shot is gratuitous at best, but cannot be subject to a hinder call.*”

OTTO SAYS: Regarding your question, please carefully read Rule 4.5(b) that says, in effect, that BOTH players are entitled to try to return the ball even if one has already tried once. Couple that with Rule 3.13(e), which says that the ball remains in play until it touches the floor a second time, and you can see that BOTH of your opponents CAN be hindered and are entitled to try for the ball. Lastly, as you might guess, I also do NOT agree with your contention that “... today’s conundrum is not covered in the booklet.”

“... both players are entitled to try to return the ball even if one has already tired once.”

In the Nov/Dec issue, I stated that “Just as the referee must signal the start of each rally by calling the score (or second serve), he should also signal the end of each rally by declaring a “skip”, “two bounces”, or a “hinder” of some type. Technically, every rally ends in one of those ways.” Well, my friend **Ralph DiFelice** from **Owings Mill, MD**, read that and quickly dropped me an email pointing out that I had missed another way that a rally could end—namely when the ball is hit out of the court, which does not fall under one of the possibilities I mentioned. Of course, Ralph is right about that and I suspect there are a few other exceptions I overlooked. Yet my basic point is still valid. The referee must make a definitive call of some kind to signal that the rally has ended. While I don’t feel good about missing

something like that, it does make me feel good to know that someone out there is reading this column!

Always “Play by the Rules” and, if you don’t have a copy, I encourage you to find and review them on-line at:

<http://www.usaracquetball.com/Default.aspx?tabid=839>. Do you have a rules/refereeing question? Be sure to email it to me at ODietrich@usra.org and you might find it featured in an upcoming issue of Racquetball.

37 Secrets from the Pro Tour

Find more of the 37 Secrets at
www.racquetballacademy.com

More Glossary Terms:

Dead Zone: the area directly behind an opponent in deep in the court, where the non-hitter is unable to cover any shot.

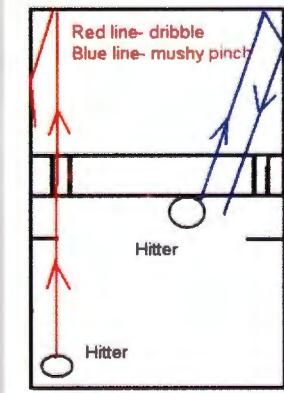
Block Out: when the hitter is able to successfully keep the non-hitter in the dead zone.

Joy Zone: the exact spot where the hitter loves to hit the ball. (Similar to the strike zone) in both height and depth in relation to the hips and shoulders. Also known as 'when the ball falls into your bucket'

Mushy pinch: a pinch shot that hits the front wall first, then the sidewall

Dribble: a down the line shot that hits the front wall, then the sidewall/floor crack, 2-6 feet from the front wall, and bounces twice quickly (dribbles out-not a clean line)

Clean line: a down the line that doesn't hit any side wall, ever.



Unlimited Timeouts

Timeouts are usually used for rest time, strategy planning, or to break the momentum of the match. When a player has already used all of his or her time outs, or wants to save one for later... we say they need to "Go to the towel" The most popular way on the pro tours to get extra time, or break the rhythm of match is to get a towel and spend time dry wet spots from the floor, (even if the court is dry.) Tying shoes, retying shoes, picking up imaginary lint off the court floor, fiddling with the doorknob, wiping 'moisture' off eye guards are also popular. Lesser known ones are arguing with the referee about a call, especially one that's not really arguable, asking the ref the score, asking how many timeouts remaining, asking who served the last point, (especially after a long rally), and asking the ref to watch for certain things, (like encroachment or screen serves)... and of course using your full ten seconds, then calling the timeout. The most dramatic, and less-than-honest methods are to ask for the tournament director to review a call, and/or purposely misbehave to get a technical or cause some sort of ruckus. I am pleased to report that I have only ever witnessed this particular type of 'timeout' several occasions.

Fran's HOUSE



Q: FRAN, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO "PLAY THE PERCENTAGES"?

A:

"Playing the Percentages" is what I teach, preach and live by.

It is how I coach Jason Mannino, Sudsy Monchik and ALL my other students. No matter what level of player you are, pro or amateur, "playing the percentages...in other words playing the odds" is a philosophy I have always supported and encouraged players to play by.

It not only works in racquetball, but in many other sports...let's take a quick look:

1-Basketball – If you had one second left in a game and you were down by one point would you want to take a lay up, a foul shot or a 3 pointer?

Obviously, a lay up is the highest percentage of all 3 shots and you'd have a GREATER chance of scoring and winning the game.

2-Football – If you were down by 2 points with 3 seconds left would you want to hit a field goal from 2 yards, 20 yards or 40 yards out?

Obviously, from 2 yards out as it is the highest percentage chance that you'd score and win the game.

3-Golf – If you were putting on the green and you were down by a stroke would you want to putt when you were inches away from the hole or a few feet?

Obviously, you would want to be inches from the hole as the percentages are higher and you'd have a greater chance of you getting it in the hole.

Now let's see how "playing the percentages" works in racquetball:

Racquetball is NO different.

Here is an important factor to keep in your mind when deciding what shot to take when....30% of all balls can be killed from the dotted line. A kill shot, if you recall, is defined as a shot that hits 6 inches and lower on the front wall and bounces 2X before the short line. Therefore the further back you go in the court the less likely you or your opponent will be able to effectively kill the ball. So when you are playing you want to keep these percentages in mind.

Good rules of thumb are as follows:

1. When you are in front of your opponent and you are shooting the ball that is when you should kill or pinch kill the ball as you are closer to the front wall (your target) and your percentages are higher.
2. When you are behind your opponent and you are shooting the ball that is when you pass (hits 18 inches and lower and bounces 2X before the

back wall) as you are further from the front wall (your target) and your percentages are MUCH lower than 30% to kill the ball.

3. When you are off balance or out of position you want to go up and hit either a ceiling or Z ball rather than try and shoot it because your percentages of hitting a winner diminishes drastically.

4. When you are returning serve you are approximately 38 feet from the front wall and your percentages are EXTREMELY low of effectively killing the ball. Remember 30% of all balls can be killed from the dotted line, therefore "playing the percentages" is "MUCHO" important in this situation because if you take a low percentage shot like a kill or pinch two things can occur:

a- You could skip the ball and give your opponent a gift, an easy point.

Or

b- You could leave it up and your opponent is up in the front court after serving and they can take advantage of your mistake and score an easy point.

Remember when you are returning the serve you are at the disadvantage, you are in the back court, while your opponent has the advantage being in the front court. Don't get suckered into taking a low percentage shot. Your goal should be to move the server out of the middle and put them in the most difficult position to score which is the last 3-5 feet of the court. This is done with a pass or a ceiling...2 very critical shots you need in your game.

If you watch some of the most consistent players on the tour like...Jason Mannino, Jack Huzek, Christie Van Hess, Cheryl Gudinas, just to name a few you will see "HIGH PERCENTAGE" racquetball at it's BEST. I have been analyzing videos of the pros for over 20 years and I have watched so many great players and great athletes never reach their potential because they "play low percentage" racquetball and try to shoot and kill everything from everywhere on the court....no matter what. Their philosophy is "live by the sword, die by the sword".

Take it from me and Jason, Jack, Cheryl and Christie that "High Percentage" racquetball is the philosophy that will win you more points, more games and thusly more matches. Our records speak for themselves.

Good Luck!

Hope to see you at one of my camps for live personal instruction or the next best thing buy our video if you can't make a camp at this time. Go to www.FranDavisRacquetball.com for details on both the video and camps.



What You Don't Know About Tension Can Cause Headaches with Your String

By Steve Crandall
Vice President, Sales & Marketing
Ashaway Racket Strings

We've talked a lot in this column about stringing tight for control and stringing loose for power, but we haven't talked about the subject of string tension itself. And if, like me, you tend to hang around the stringing booth at tournaments, you'll know there's actually quite a bit to learn. Understanding tension may not help improve your game, but it can definitely help you avoid stringing headaches.

But to do the topic justice, I wanted to tap into a real expert on the subject. Vince Chiarelli is one of the most experienced stringers I know and someone I've worked with at many tournaments. A Master Racquet Technician and owner of String Along with Vince in Largo, FL, Vince has strung over 20,000 rackets across all racket sports over the years, and has even strung for top ATP pros at Championships like the French Open, the China Open in Beijing, the NASDAQ-100 in Florida, and many more. Here's a brief synopsis of what Vince had to say about tension:

Whenever we string at tournaments, we always ask players what string they use, what tension they normally string to, and what type of machine they normally have their rackets strung on. This is because string tension depends not only on the type and gauge of the string, but also on the type of machine used to do the stringing and how well that machine is calibrated.

There are a number of things players need to understand about tension. The first, of course, is that different string materials respond to tension in different ways. Some materials are more elastic and will act differently than others even when strung to the same tension. The way strings are constructed is also a factor. For instance, a solid monofilament string will be stiffer when the ball hits the string bed than a string that has a smaller, monofilament core and one, two or three wraps of smaller filaments around that. There will be more elasticity to the monofilament core type, since it is a thinner core. On the other hand, a multifilament string, which could have over a thousand separate filaments, will stretch more when the ball is hit. That means you're going to get more power out of it for the same tension, especially with multifilament nylon and Zyex(R) fibers, like Ashaway's SuperKill(R) XL and PowerKill(R) Pro. And you're going to get more comfort, because it will absorb some of the shock of the ball coming in.

But getting 'the same tension' is not as easy as it sounds. What many people don't realize is that different types—and makes—of machines will tension strings differently.

The biggest difference is between manual, or 'lock-out tension' machines, and 'continuous pull' electronic machines like those

made by Babolat. Generally, you'll get about 10% higher tension with an electronic machine, even when they're both set to the same weight. This is because the manual machines use a hand crank to pull the string. When they get to the desired tension, they 'lock' and stop pulling. As soon as that happens, the string begins to relax, so that by the time you've gotten the string clamped, it has already lost some tension.

Electronic machines keep pulling at the desired tension, until you clamp the string. We did a number of direct comparisons when I was stringing with Ashaway at a tournament a few years ago and found that if both a manual and electronic machine were set to 32 lbs, the string on the manually strung racket would test out at only 28 lbs.

The other thing is that rackets strung with electronic machines hold tension better, so the tension loss over time is not so great. I'm not sure I understand exactly why or how this happens, but we've confirmed it: an electronic stringing job will hold tension better.

That said, there is a manual machine, called a drop-weight machine, which does continually pull the string. It uses an arm with a heavy cylinder on it to pull the string. The arm is calibrated and you move the weight to the desired tension. However, these machines are tricky to use. In order to achieve the proper tension, the arm has to rest parallel to the work surface once the string is attached. If you don't get it perfect the first time, you have to stretch the string again which can result in uneven tension across the bed.

Another thing people don't realize—including some stringers—is that stringing machines need to be calibrated in order to perform to specification. When we string tournaments, we calibrate our machines every day, but that's not always the case. My advice to players attending tournaments is to always have one racket strung first as a test. Practice with it to see how it feels, then have the stringers adjust from there.



Electronic machines continuously pull the string, resulting in about 10% more tension than stringing with manual machines. Rackets strung with electronic machines also tend to hold tension better.



Intercollegiate Racquetball Spotlight

By Shane Wood

Western Collegiate Racquetball Conference

The Western Collegiate Racquetball Conference (WCRC) is reinvigorated and growing as over 40 men and women players from seven schools in the Central and Northern California areas are competing in collegiate tournaments.

Teams from Sacramento State, UC Berkeley, and UC Davis have returned to compete with new teams from Stanford, UC Santa Cruz, San Jose State, CSU East Bay, and CSU Fullerton.

Collegiate racquetball has been one of the sport's bright spots in recent years. Shane Wood, USAR Intercollegiates Program Director, wrote in May about the year-over-year growth they have had in collegiate racquetball in the eastern region (see <http://meetandplay.com/> - Forum - Collegiate Racquetball):

The ECRC has pretty steadily grown 50-100% each year for the last 3 or 4 years. We used to have a base of 5-7 teams. This year, we had 28 teams compete, and 5 more already that we got set up at clubs at their schools and will be participating next season.

Collegiate tournaments are all about teamwork and fun competition, and are one of the best ways to grow your game. All players will score points based on how they finish in the tournament, and all players will contribute to their team's overall success.

Our tournaments are easy one day events, and we are using the "Olympic" format for tournament structure. This assures all players that they will play a number of matches throughout the day - win or lose!

Schools in the conference also scrimmage against one another regularly throughout the school year. These fun informal events are a great chance to play a variety of people, and to learn and try out new shots. Scrimmages include all club members - not just team members - and are a great way to involve more people and grow the racquetball community!

Always having fun ...



Fall Tournament

UC Berkeley

National powerhouse Sacramento State won the overall team title by taking top spots in both Men's and Women's Division I. They were lead by their top player Mark Salinas, a senior at Sacramento State, who is also playing in the open division at CSRA tournaments.



Stanford's new team was a close-second due to the depth on its men's team, sweeping top spots in Men Div II and Div III. Berkeley finished a strong third, with the best women's team overall. UC Davis placed fourth, with a balanced team of men and women.

Winter Tournament

UC Davis

UC Berkeley won the Winter tournament with a strong performance from the men's team, and with their women's team taking the top three spots! Women are making the difference now at the tournaments! Kyle Sevens (UC Davis) won Men's Division I, Carlos Penagos (San Jose State) won Men's Division II, and Guillaume Jospin (UC Santa Cruz) won Men's Division III. We're getting a nice balance across the schools as players and programs improve.



A special thanks to: Allan Santos (UC Berkeley) for coordinating facilities at fall tourney; Benny Goldenberg for coordinating facilities for their first tourney at UC Davis; and Matt Hills (Stanford) for helping to run the tourneys and keeping everyone in touch.

We are looking to help other schools especially in Southern California, Nevada and Oregon build programs, and get involved in collegiate tournaments. If you'd like to play in an intercollegiate event, or to get help in starting a club, contact:

Del Villanueva -
CSRA Collegiate Liaison
delfirst2fifteen.1@netzero.net

John Bardos -
WCRC Regional Commissioner
jbardos@ucsc.edu

Read more about the WCRC at: www.WCRCRacquetball.org

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Camp Schedule

2006		
March	3-5	Minneapolis, MN
March	17-19	Kansas City (Overland Park, Kansas)
March	24-26	Las Vegas, NV
May	19-21	Lansing, MI
June	2-4	San Diego, CA
June	9-11	New Orleans, LA
July	21-23	Boston, MA
July	28-30	Woodbridge, NJ
August	4-6	San Francisco, CA
August	22-24	Orlando, FL
October	6-8	TBA
October	20-22	Bethlehem, PA
October	27-29	Portland, OR
November	3-5	TBA
November	10-12	Greensboro, NC
November	30	December 7 Aruba (Caribbean Island... Advanced Camp)

Future cities... CO: Los Angeles, CA: NC, TN, etc.
Above dates are subject to the IRT schedule

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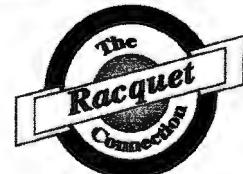
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4/4/06	4/8/06	Utah State Singles	Marv Jenson	South Jordan, UT		801-253-4404
			Recreation Center			
4/7/06	4/9/06	2006 WY STATE SINGLES	Wyoming Athletic Club	Casper, WY		307-265-6928
4/7/06	4/9/06	2006 REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Orlando Fitness and Racquet Club	Orlando, FL		407-645-3550
4/7/06	4/9/06	2006 REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Sportset - Syosset Club	Syosset, NY		718-429-8489
4/7/06	4/9/06	SIERRA SPRING SPLAT	Millenium Sports Club	Shingle Springs, CA		916-496-0388
			El Dorado			
4/8/06	4/8/06	DALLAS SERIES IV	Landmark Fitness Factory	Dallas, TX		972-233-6774
4/19/06	4/23/06	2006 GRESHAM SCION 26th ANNUAL NORTHWEST REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Cascade Athletic Club	Gresham, OR		503-665-4142
4/20/06	4/23/06	2006 REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Severna Park Racquetball and Fitness Club	Millersville MD		443-850-2648
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4/20/06	4/23/06	2006 REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Solon Athletic Club	Solon, OH		614-890-6073
4/20/06	4/23/06	2006 REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Executive Hit & Sports Center	Manchester, NH		603-688-4753
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4/20/06	4/23/06	2006 REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Los Caballeros	Fountain Valley, CA		714-546-8560 x244
4/21/06	4/23/06	2006 REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS	Southlake Racquet Club (Atlanta)	Morrow (Atlanta), GA		770-972-2303
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4/28/06	4/30/06	Fishkill Spring Fling	Allsport Fitness Club-Fishkill	Fishkill, NY		845-569-8083
MAY						
5/4/06	5/7/06	CINCO DE MAYO	Pueblo Athletic Club	Pueblo, CO		719-561-3488
5/5/06	5/7/06	2006 CA STATE JUNIORS	In Shape West Lane	Stockton, CA		209-472-2100
5/5/06	5/7/06	EAST COAST DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	Wilmington Athletic Club	Wilmington, NC		910-343-5950
5/5/06	5/7/06	NORTHWEST DOUBLES CHALLENGE Bally's Total Fitness		Kent, WA		253-431-3789
5/5/06	5/7/06	DALLAS OPEN & PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP	Landmark Fitness Factory	Dallas, TX		972-233-6774
5/11/06	5/13/06	MEMBERS AND FRIENDS	YMCA - Pikes Peak Region	Colorado Springs, CO		719-473-9622
5/20/06	5/20/06	DALLAS SERIES V	LANDMARK Fitness Factory	Dallas, TX		972-233-6774
5/24/06	5/29/06	US NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	YMCA - Downtown Houston	Houston, TX		719-635-5396
JUNE						
6/1/06	6/4/06	CHARITY TOURNAMENT FOR NF	P.R.O. Sports Club	Bellevue, WA		206-227-1336
6/10/06	6/10/06	TRIPLE CROWN SHOOTOUT	Maverick Athletic Club	Arlington, TX		817-275-3348
6/17/06	6/17/06	Summer Splat	Spectrum Health Club	San Antonio, TX		210-344-8596
6/21/06	6/25/06	US NATIONAL JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS	Michigan Athletic Club-Lansing	East Lansing, MI		719-635-5396
6/23/06	6/25/06	Summer Splat Shot	Western Kentucky University	Bowling Green, KY		270-792-6634

JULY

7/1/06	7/1/06	COLORADO STATE GAMES	Lynmar Racquet & Health Club	Colorado Springs, CO	719-491-4703
7/8/06	7/8/06	TRIPLE CROWN SHOOTOUT	Maverick Athletic Club	Arlington, TX	817-275-3348
7/15/06	7/15/06	Hot Tamale	Spectrum Health Club	San Antonio, TX	210-344-8596
7/26/06	7/29/06	NMRA MASTERS INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP	Northwest Athletic Club - Hiway 100	Brooklyn Center, MN	763-535-3571

AUGUST

8/5/06	8/5/06	Tennessee State Juniors Championship	Clarksville Athletic Club	Clarksville, TN	931-624-7791
8/12/06	8/12/06	TRIPLE CROWN SHOOTOUT	Maverick Athletic Club	Arlington, TX	817-275-3348

SEPTEMBER

9/8/06	9/9/06	TRIPLE CROWN CHAMPIONSHIPS	Maverick Athletic Club	Arlington, TX	817-275-3348
9/27/06	10/1/06	US NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS	Arizona State University	Tempe, AZ	719-635-5396

OCTOBER

10/13/06	10/15/06	2006 TX STATE DOUBLES	Maverick Athletic Club	Arlington, TX	817-275-3348
10/28/06	10/28/06	Spookfest	Spectrum Health Club	San Antonio, TX	210-344-8596
10/28/06	10/30/06	MUSIC CITY OPEN	YMCA - Downtown Nashville	Nashville, TN	615-895-3679

NOVEMBER

11/3/06	11/4/06	2006 TX STATE SENIORS	Maverick Athletic Club	Arlington, TX	817-275-3348
11/4/06	11/6/06	SPRING SHOOTOUT	Kildaire Farms Fitness and Racquetball Cntr	Cary, NC	919-467-1852
11/15/06	11/19/06	2006 CHOICE HOTELS US OPEN RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS	The Racquet Club of Memphis	Memphis, TN	719/635-5396

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THE FINALS: MAY 24-29
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SOUND OFF!

EKTELON® SIGNS BEN CROFT AND ANDY HAWTHORNE

Bordentown, NJ – Ektelon, the leader in racquet innovations, recently announced the signing of two up and coming racquetball players Ben Croft and Andy Hawthorne. Both Croft and Hawthorne have been playing with Ektelon as junior and players for many years and are now stepping into leadership roles as professional players.

“Ektelon feels great with the mix we have in professional racquetball with Kane Waselechuk, the #1 player in the world, legends John Ellis and Ruben Gonzalez and Croft and Hawthorne as rising stars,” stated Andy Roberts, Promotions Manager for Ektelon, “We signed both players (Croft and Hawthorne) because we believe this gives us a solid foundation for exposure now and in the future on the IRT tour.”

Croft, born February 11, 1985 and hailing from Lake Bluff, IL, is the 2003 and 2004 Junior National Champion, the 2003 and 2004 Junior World Champion and, most recently, claimed the 2005 Intercollegiate Championship.

Hawthorne, born September 7, 1982, residing in Tallmadge, Ohio, has five Intercollegiate titles and numerous regional and state titles on his resume. Based on his fantastic semi-final finish at the 2005 National Singles Championships in Houston, he demonstrated why he is clearly one of the hottest rising stars in the sport. On top of Hawthorne’s great match play, he will take on the role of managing Ektelon’s presence at each IRT event.

For more information please contact us at 800-283-2635 or log onto our website at www.ektelon.com.

About Ektelon:

Based in Bordentown, New Jersey, Ektelon is a division of Prince Sports, Inc. Ektelon has enjoyed the longest, most successful reign of dominance in the sport of racquetball. Ektelon’s heritage includes the introduction of more revolutionary technologies and programs to the sport of racquetball than any other company. Ektelon innovations include oversized racquetball racquets, the Racquet Taper System (RTS) and Power Ring® racquets, among others.

SHAWN ROYSTER SIGNS WITH TEAM EKTELON

Bordentown, NJ – Ektelon, the leader in racquet innovations, recently announced the signing of Shawn Royster. Royster will be playing Ektelon head to toe and will also consult for Ektelon on various marketing and communications initiatives, especially in the media area with his company Royster Productions

“We’re excited about Roysters energy and enthusiasm about the sport of racquetball,” stated Scott Winters, General Manager of Indoor Court Sports, Prince Sports, Inc., “Royster is jumping right into his role at Ektelon, bringing young, fresh ideas to the brand.”

Royster plays the IRT tour but is actually better known for his work in the media arena on videos for the US Open, Outdoor Racquetball and other events in the sport. He is a top level player active in Elite competition and is very serious about his game.

“I’ve always admired Ektelon’s push to continue to find new niches in racquetball to help grow the sport,” stated Royster. “I’m excited to be working with the leader in the sport. A brand that has such a great reputation and image, I’m anxious to bring my expertise in media and tournament competition to the team.”

For more information please contact us at 800-283-2635 or log onto our website at www.ektelon.com.

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ANNOUNCING THE NEW CALIFORNIA STATE WOR REP

Allan Kazem has been recently appointed to the position of the California Representative of World Outdoor Racquetball. Allan, a Team Ektelon member, has been selected to lead WOR’s efforts throughout the state. He will be overseeing all California-based WOR Sanctioned events, will be directing a number of local and regional shootouts and tournaments. He will be responsible for direct marketing and promotion of the national WOR efforts. In addition, he will work in collaboration with other state directors, sponsors, and racquetball groups, interested in participating in California WOR events. Allan will also lead the Ektelon Outdoor Team in California as part of his new position. “We are very excited to have Allan on board and leading the WOR efforts in California, he has decades of experience with the everything involved with outdoor” commented Hank Marcus, WOR Executive Director.

Allan begins immediately and can be contacted at Allan@worldoutdoorracquetball.com or 714.504.4781.

To send a letter to the editor for publication in RACQUETBALL Magazine, please send your name, address, telephone number, and the letter to:

Sound Off!

1685 West Uintah, Colorado Springs, CO 80904

or

e-mail to Hfender@usra.org

Subject line - Sound Off!

WOMEN'S SENIORS/MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS AT THE MAVERICK

By Bruce Adams and Kendra Tutsch 1/29/2006

The 17th Annual Women's Seniors/Masters Racquetball Championships were held January 27-29, 2006 at the Maverick Athletic Club in Arlington, Texas involving 95 participants in ten singles divisions in age and age/skill. There was some "Fun Doubles" that started the championships on Thursday evening to break the ice and get rid of the nerves. This warmup event produced \$454.00 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Wilson provided many "Hope" items for door prizes, and thanks to the Maverick Club for providing the courts. Some of the previous locations for the WSRMA were San Francisco in 2004; Los Angeles in 2001; Chicago in 1999; Atlanta in 1995; and Madison in 1990. The 2007 event will be in Orlando, Florida in late January. Monitor the association website <http://my.execpc.com/~tutsch/WSMRA/main.html> for more information.

The Maverick Athletic Club (The Mav), owner Bob Sullens and program director Leo Vasquez hosted the event in superb fashion as it has many, many others over the years. The 12 courts kept the competition flowing and the spectators constantly shuffling from court to court to check out the latest action. Everyone appreciated the hospitality, plus the very nice rooms at the Arlington Crowne Plaza hotel. The round-robin event was well run by tournament director Jere Luttner and her committee. A two-day silent auction supervised by Denise Mock generated over \$1300.00 split between the association and the USAR College Scholarship program. Many thanks go to our National sponsor Wilson for providing many great items for the auction, along with donated racquets from E-Force and Ektelon, and merchandise from many other generous sponsors.

Two-time Hall of Famer Lola Markus stated "The tournament is FABULOUS! There is a lot of work to prepare, but there is nowhere to get the camaraderie and competition for women. The matches were fun; the banquet had good food; everyone was friendly; the newcomers and younger players were impressed with the competition. It is an outstanding event for women's racquetball!" Nineteen states were represented, with the farthest competitor coming from Alaska.



The buffet banquet had its normal presentation of gifts and awards for those finishing early. One unique point was entertainment provided by a harem of belly dancers from the Dallas/Fort Worth area. One of the five in the harem was tournament director Jere Luttner. See photo! Jere has been taking lessons for about a year and was rather nervous performing in front of her fellow players. The group performed four different dances to very loud cheers and whistles. A disc jockey kept all of the women dancing into the early hours, with other hotel guests dropping in to join us.

Semifinals and finals in the large age groups were played on Sunday morning. In 40+ two newcomers to the tournament met as Brenda Kyzer (SC) defeated Patty Willyard (TX). The 45+ final was a repeat of 2005 as Debra Tisinger (CA) beat Linda Moore (NE). In 50+ last year's second place finisher Susan Pfahler (FL) claimed the title defeating Marsha Berry (KY). In 55+ Nancy Kronenfeld (IL) beat Susan Keiffer (MN) in a match between two newcomers to the 55+. Other divisions were decided on total points. In 35+ Jean Halahan (NY) defeated Tina Hagen (CO). In 60+ Margaret Hoff (IL) repeated as champion over Cece Palaski (NM). In 65+ Mildred Gwinn returned to the courts and won over Marquita Molina (CA). 70+ was claimed by Lolas Markus (IL) and 75+ by Reta Harring (WI). New for the tournament this year B/C divisions were added to encourage players to give the format a try. In 35+ B/C Kris Kaskawal (CA) took first on total points over Bernadette Zimmerman (TX) and in 45+ B/C it was very close as Kathy Rapp (IA) defeated Lynne Weisbart (IL) on total points. In the new USAR ranking system, the results of all round-robin matches, including preliminary matches, are reported

The purpose of the Women's Senior/Masters Racquetball Association (WSMRA) is to promote and accentuate women's racquetball across the nation. The site of the tournament changes annually. The WSMRA is governed by a Board of Directors, and the tournament is a Level 5 USA Racquetball sanctioned event. The head of the Board is Kendra Tutsch of Wisconsin (kdtutsch@wisc.edu). The WSMRA would like to thank its National Sponsor Wilson for excellent support over the last several years, Dave Negrete and the IRT for supporting this year's tournament, along with many other local and national donors, all of which are listed on our web site where you can also find more details of this year's tournament and updates on the 2007 tournament.



The Inside Scoop

By Mike Ceresia

- 5 Time IRF World Champion
- 11 Time Canadian National Champion

Time to Get a Job?

Times have changed for today's top racquetball playing professional. There was a time when the top players could play tournaments, conduct a few clinics and exhibitions, and make a solid living. It appears those times are gone...

Right now, Kane Waselenchuk, Cliff Swain (and, it is rumoured, Jack Huczek) are on the market. They are looking for their "stake horse," the racquet manufacturer that will pay them for their services. On the women's side, Christie Van Hees's current contract expires at the end of this season. You would imagine the bidding is fast and furious with posturing, positioning, diabolical planning and a ton of creativity. Dream on...

Swain, considered by most to be the greatest to grab the short racquet, has been without a racquet deal for a few years. Nothing, zero, nada. This guy can't get a deal because of many factors. However, you would think one of the Big 5 companies would like to use him and his credentials in the 6th quarter of his career. Swain soldiers on because he needs the competitive fix and loves the game and the lifestyle. Also, the veteran has a few deals outside of the racquetball industry that contribute to his bottom line. Racquet deal or not, he is doing what he wants in the true sense of an independent contractor.

And what about the retired former five-time IRT #1 Sudsy Monchik? He said sayonara in his late 20's. This retirement was complicated — young talented foes, injuries and his family's economic needs contributed to Sudsy's premature exit.

The racquet manufacturers are the custodians of our great game on all levels. Their main responsibility is to make as much money as they can and contribute to the company bottom line. It is not their responsibility to throw large sums of money at the top pros out of some sort of moral obligation. It is straight economics — how much can Player X contribute to my racquet sales at retail/e-tail; within the ridiculously over-sponsored group of players who derive a sense of pride from their top players; at the

grass root level; and through visibility on TV and the pro tours?

The ideal player is easy to work with, keenly aware of how he/she can contribute to the bottom line, represents his/her company with class and dignity and realizes a strong win-win relationship will lead to a long prosperous relationship. The ideal company should bring the same things to the table. In addition, it should work hands-on with the players and maximize the company's return on investment by effectively advertising and marketing the player.

It seems easy enough, but the record shows it is not.

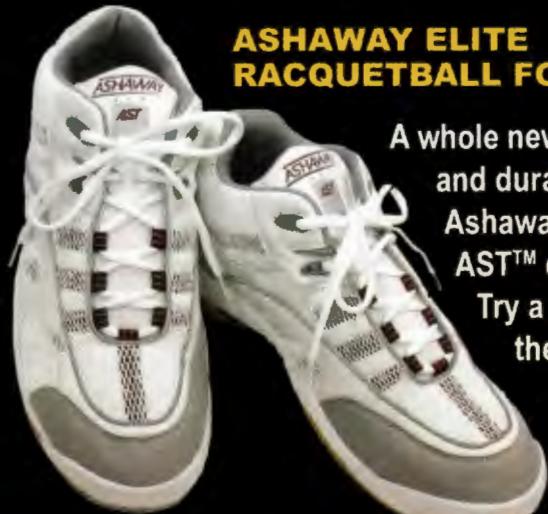
Furthermore, the top player's contract usually sets the bar for everybody else. About four years ago, Kane Waselenchuk, a can't-miss prospect, signed a long term deal with Ektelon. Both parties were thrilled. All the components were in place to make this union work. But it didn't work, and now the principals are at odds and have their own very different stories as to why it didn't work out. Outside factors contributed to the demise of this relationship. The repercussions will be felt for years!

The IRT has a reasonably strong tour with two major league events. The Women's tour has been in a state of disarray since Jim Hiser and USA Racquetball were eliminated from the equation. Houston and National Doubles are excellent events. The players can shine at these events and strut their manufacturer's gear. However, more TV would certainly help to shift the balance of power. Also, more TV would help the companies sell more racquets. More cash solves a lot of problems.

The reality is the racquet manufacturers are holding the cards and are keenly aware of their rival companies' plans, tendencies and market situation. The players are independent contractors and they have options. One of those options is to acquire full-time employment and prepare for life after racquetball. They can play professionally and work at the same time. Olympic athletes do it.; it doesn't seem like the worst fate. In fact, it could be a blessing in disguise. Until the balance of power shifts again or the players come up with an alternative plan—the writing is on the wall!

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Just like World Champion Jack Huczek



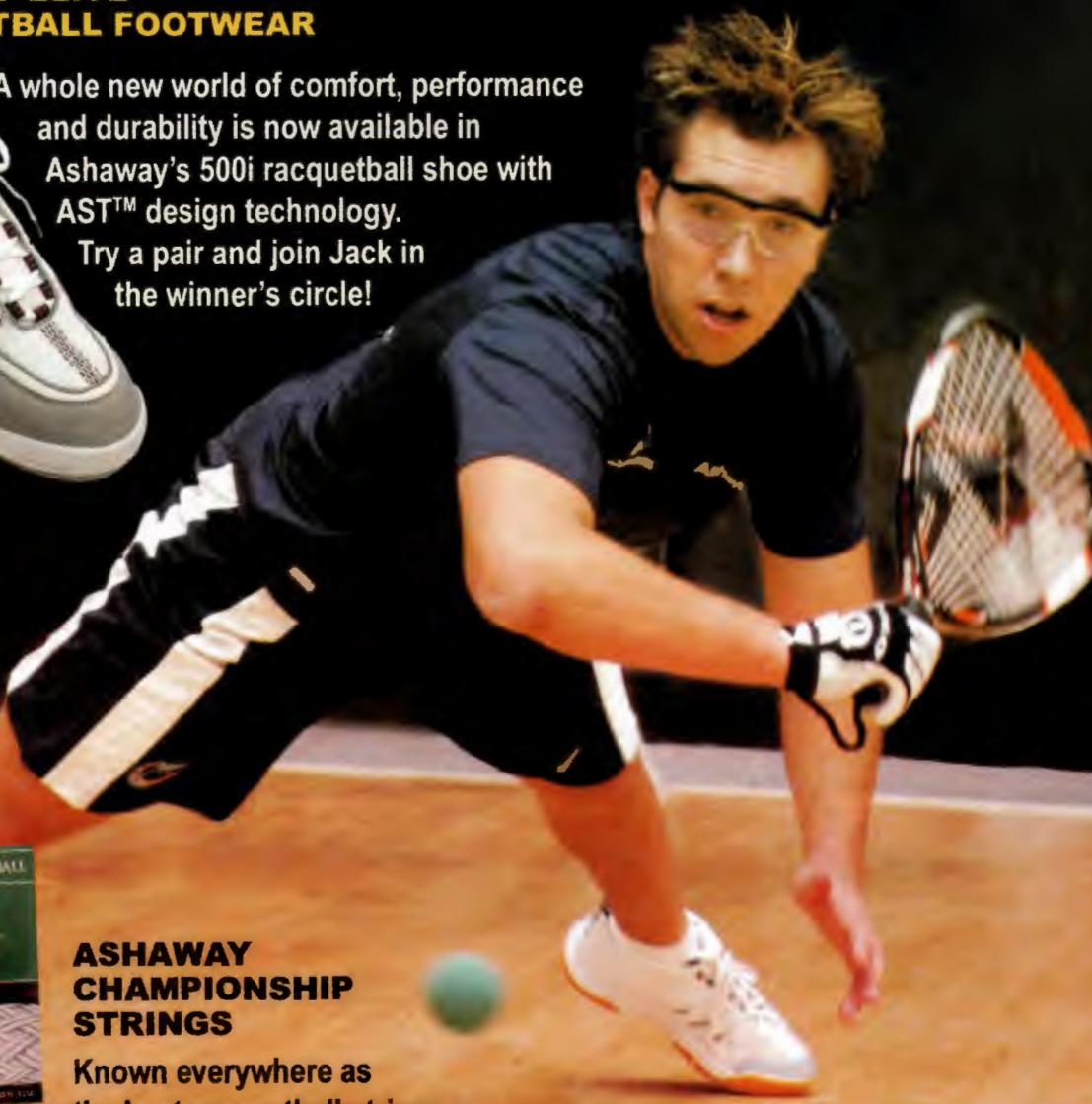
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