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Letters To The Editor

I've just finished scanning your April issue of *Racquetball* and was thrilled to see your notation of our Sportime Mid-South Women's Open in January.

We began the tournament for women two years ago with only 26 participants. The figure rose to 80 this year as you printed in your article. We fully expect another dramatic increase next time around.

The interest by women at our club reflects what you are finding elsewhere; racquetball is a sport the ladies enjoy playing and have success playing.

For court club operations in fringe areas of play, such as the south, success or failure likely depends upon generation of more women players. We hope our Mid-South Open is helping to do just that.

Thanks again for the recognition of our efforts and those of the ladies who

made it possible.

Ken Smith
Club Manager
Sportime Racquet Club
Greensboro, N.C.

Many thanks for the April issue of *Racquetball*...Here are some thoughts on the editing of my original manuscript. (Ms. Lepore reported on the Women '79 tournament held last February in Boston.) First and most vehemently, I disclaim the title, "A Ladies' Lark." To me it implies that the tourney was a frivolous affair. The fine athletes who competed in Women '79 deserve better than that. Their caliber, enthusiasm and dedication to racquetball was anything but frivolous. . .

After the above, you probably think I'm rather testy. If so, please know my response is not so much a personal criticism of someone's editing job, but rather my input toward raising the standard of excellence in non-sexist racquetball journalism. You and the IRA magazine have taken a significant step

toward sex-fair reporting by dedicating the April issue to women. I commend you for this. (I think you've gone much farther than the USRA ever has; their magazine has imprisoned women behind the bars of a few blue-framed pages.)

Anyway, to continue the momentum toward excellence, I urge you to solicit articles from women players at all levels—having them write features and reports on men as well as women. And since a fellow wrote the lead story on women for the April issue, how about having a woman pen a lead feature on men for a coming edition!

Martha Lepore
Melrose, Mass.

[Racquetball welcomes contributions from talented writers of either sex. As for the idea of a story on men in racquetball . . . well, we'll think about it.]

Racquetball welcomes correspondence from its readers. Letters are subject to editing for clarity and length.

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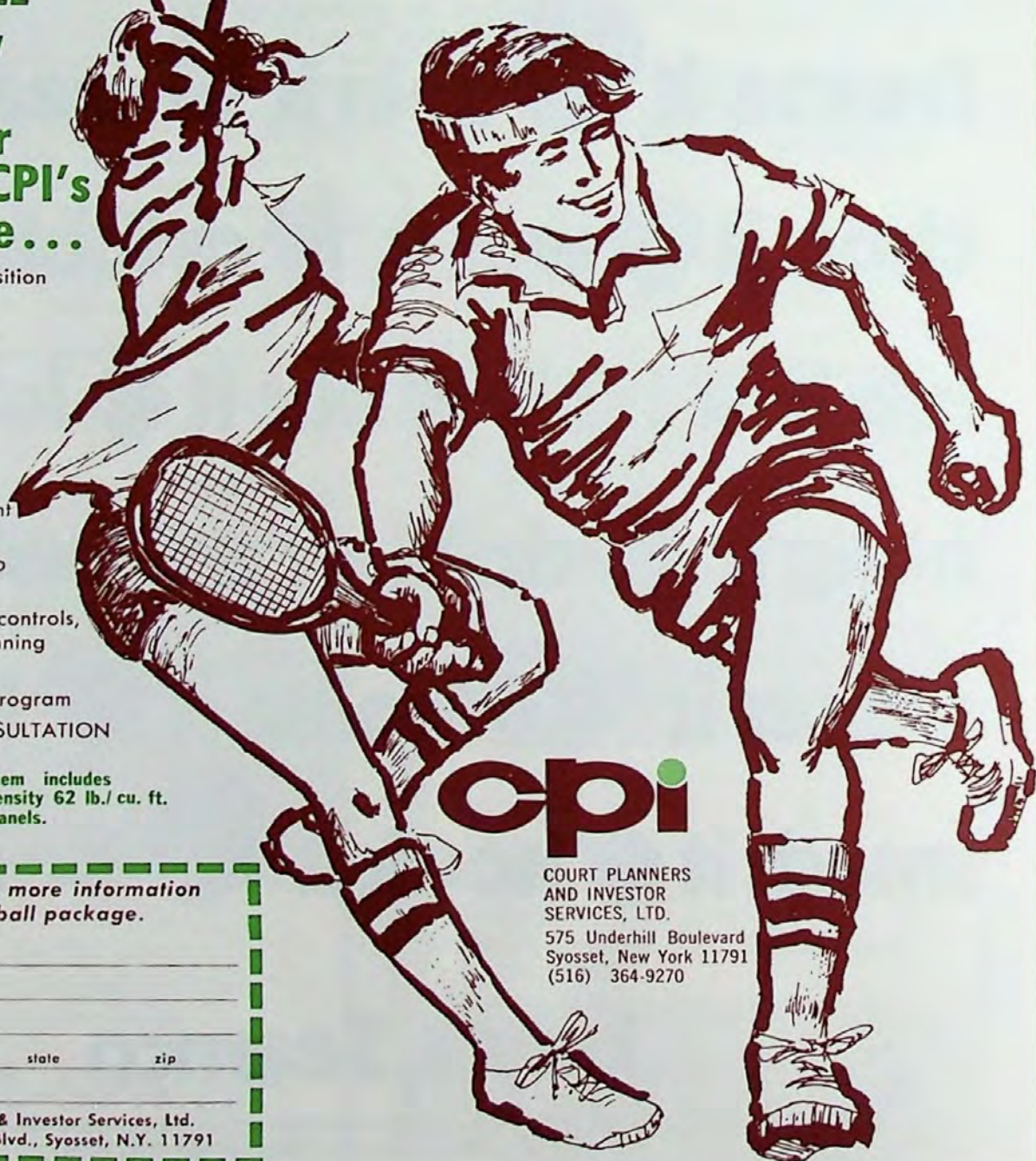
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NEW DIRECTIONS

Dear Members:

One of the least emphasized areas of our game is junior development. During the incredible explosion of our great game, the development of junior racquetball has often taken a back seat.

But now there are clouds on the horizon as the racquetball explosion runs its course and court occupancy becomes a competitive enterprise. Interestingly enough, one of the major strengths of tennis has been its junior programs. Of the 145,000 members of the United States Tennis Association, over 45 per cent of the members are juniors. Racquetball associations, by comparison, can only quote overall figures of less than 15 per cent, which is a sad indictment of our sport.

We must wake up now and begin immediately to formulate local, state and regional junior programs, instead of holding just one major tournament a year.

We are most pleased to have Ektelon as the IRA's sponsor for the junior nationals this year. Credit must be given to Ektelon as the only manufacturer in racquetball today dedicated to promoting junior racquetball on a day-to-day basis. Ektelon recognizes, as does the IRA, that junior racquetball is the future of our game even down to the 10-and-under division. For the first time this year, the 10-and-under division was run in the regionals and from every report we received they stole the show.

Court club owners, wake up! The juniors are your future!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Luke".

Luke St. Onge,
Executive Director

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SHORT LINES

Women Form Players' Association



Shannon Wright (left) and Jennifer Harding, tough competitors on the racquetball court, are now on the same team—at least in a manner of speaking. Both players are members of a five-member board of women pros that will help govern the recently-formed Ladies Professional Racquetball Association.

It's official: women professional racquetball players have formed a players' association, the Ladies Professional Racquetball Association (LPRA).

Talk of a separate association for women pros has been floating around for a number of years, as the ladies became increasingly dissatisfied with current conditions on the National Racquet Club (NRC) pro tour. Women pros receive about one-third the prize money the men receive and their segment of the pro tour is composed of 16 slots, compared to 32 for the men.

At a meeting during the Denver stop on the pro tour, the newly-formed LPRA chose Las Vegas attorney Dan Seaton as the association's commissioner. Seaton and a five-member board of women players will set the association's policies.

The LPRA's immediate goals include: increasing the prize money received by women pros, expanding the women's tournament rounds from 16 to 32, and possibly establishing a separate women's pro tour (something on the order of the Virginia Slims tour in tennis).

The LPRA becomes the second players' organization to be formed on the NRC tour. Earlier, players formed the Association of Racquetball Professionals (ARP), which will continue to represent most of the men pros.

NCCA Announces Tournament

The National Court Clubs Association (NCCA) recently announced its second annual National Court Clubs Amateur Racquetball Championships. Any member of the more than 275 NCCA member clubs is eligible to participate.

Local qualifying competition for A, B, and C level men and women players will be held until July 15 at each of the member clubs. Winners of each local

club competition in each skill class will qualify to compete in the National Championships in Southfield, Mich., August 17-20.

In announcing the tournament, NCCA President Jim Bronner said that, "Because of the enthusiasm generated by last year's tournament, we expect this year's entries to be at least double the 4,000 (that entered) the 1978 championships."

"The important and unique thing about this tournament," Bronner added, "is that it gives club players of all skill levels the excitement of participating in a national competition. And, of course, each entrant—whether a winner or not—will receive a \$10 merchandise gift certificate at his club, free court time and balls for all matches, a souvenir bag tag and a wall certificate commemorating his or her participation in the (tournament)."

Interested players should contact their local NCCA clubs for complete details.

And Now: A Floating Department Store

Some 20 to 25 manufacturers of sports/leisure products are scheduled to sell their goods aboard the Shin-saka-maru, a floating department store to set sail in Japan in early October and sail until late December. The project is being coordinated by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

"This is the optimum consumer sales period and the Japanese are big on Christmas gifts," said Bill McClure, the Department of Commerce officer heading up the program. The floating extravaganza will dock for six days in 10 major Japanese ports and will be open for sales to the public.

The U.S. Department of Commerce and the Japanese government are promoting the Shin-saka-maru voyage nationwide through the Japanese media. Market research was also prepared in Japan by Department of Commerce experts to determine which product lines have the best sales potential.

The Department of Commerce requires a \$1,000 initial participation contribution from manufacturers involved in the project and 40 per cent of all retail sales. (The \$1,000 will be applied to the 40 per cent commission.) Manufacturers participating in the project were scheduled to be confirmed last month.

For further information, contact Bill McClure, U.S. Department of Commerce, Special Services Division, 202-377-3741. ■

PLAYERS' FORUM

Answers To Your Questions

1. Presently neither racquetball association has come to grips with how to determine if a player is A, B, C or novice. When is the IRA going to take a stand on this problem and set national standards for each classification?

The problem is not an easy one to deal with. With the proliferation of amateur tournaments along with the many B, C, D and novice divisions being run, the abuse of players playing down in order to get a trophy has become serious. One overriding fact when attempting to solve this problem is that a B player from one section of the country may not be a B player in another section of the country. Levels of play vary greatly as does the interpretation of just what an A, B, C or novice player is. Various attempts have been made in the past to solve this dilemma. Some tournaments require anyone winning a lower division in any

tournament to play in the next higher division in their next tournament. Others require any finalists to play the next higher division and still other tournaments leave this decision entirely up to the tournament director.

Beginning in September, the IRA will institute a computer ranking system for each division using points as a basis. The program will be as simple as we can possibly make it and the running point totals will be available to all tournament directors for seeding and classification purposes. The exact mechanics of this ranking system will be explained in a later issue of Racquetball and will not be dealt with here.

The second major advancement in this area is an overall numerical grading system, whereby individual players will be graded on a 1 to 10 point system based upon skill level. The establishment of this skill test will be a cooperative effort of the IRA, N.C.C.A., and a professional teaching group. After a player is graded, he or she will have a numerical grade which will indicate an A, B, C or novice classification. There will also be the added advantage that no matter where

the player travels, his grade point will be relative to the same grade level elsewhere in the country.

...

2. I think the rule that any screen serve be considered a fault (as noted in "Players' Forum" in the April issue of Racquetball) has great benefit. As it is now, you can serve a risky fault serve and then get two free serves by purposely serving a screen. This should be corrected.

I also think the rule that Masters' matches are only to 15 points is ridiculous. Men over 45 can be and are in as good or better shape than younger men. The assumption that you can't keep up after 45 is demeaning and unfair. Conditioning should be just as important after 45 as before.

Tom Douglass
Iowa City, Iowa

In the fall of 1978, the Board of Directors agreed with you and repealed the 15-point rule for Masters. ■

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SAVE THE CHILDREN

A Plea For Junior Racquetball

When 10-year-old David Simonette of Baltimore leaves school every evening, he doesn't go home to play like most youngsters his age. Instead, David takes a ride out to suburban Timonium, Md., and the Padonia Court Club. There, for the next two hours, he bounces a hard rubber ball off the walls of an enclosed court. These daily practice sessions are often difficult, sometimes tedious affairs, requiring an

effort few adults would be willing to give, let alone a 10-year-old kid. But David's practice and dedication have paid off. He is the IRA's Maryland State Racquetball Champion for the 10 years old and under division, and the odds-on favorite to capture the national title in his division this year.

Three thousand miles away, in northern California, 16-year-old Mona Mook of Redding goes through much the same routine: practice, every day, without fail. Mona is also a champion, having won several state, regional and local trophies. And she, too, is one of the top seeds in her division for the upcoming IRA National Juniors Championships.

Jerome Wright is a reporter for the Memphis Commercial Appeal

It would be nice to say that David and Mona are typical junior players, representing a vast sea of fresh, eager faces that will feed the growth of racquetball for years to come. It would be nice to say that, but it would also be untrue.

Because David and Mona are *not* average junior racquetball players. Indeed, in a sport where—like it or not—adults mean dollar signs for court club owners and young players are generally considered at best a nuisance, David Simonette and Mona Mook are decidedly the exception to the rule. For both of these youngsters get the chance to play regularly and also obtain valuable tournament experience, a situation unheard of for most junior players across the country. Many junior players, in fact, have a difficult time getting near a racquetball court, let alone on it.

The reason for this is simple—and blunt: there's no money in junior racquetball. That's the cry echoed by court club owners, sponsors and tournament directors alike. Yet, in almost the same breath, these people will all proclaim that junior racquetball is the foundation for the continued development of the game, the essential ingredient that makes the "future of racquetball" something more than just a high-sounding phrase. This conflict between word and deed, between what is said about junior players and what is actually done to support them, is at the heart of the story of junior racquetball and its resolution is the key to making juniors a viable part of the game.

by Jerome Wright



John Eggerman, the top seed in the boys 17-and-under division for the IRA Junior Nationals.

The state of junior racquetball today closely parallels the fight of women to gain acceptance in the sport 5 or 10 years ago. In those days, women players often complained of being short-circuited on playing time at some clubs, of being treated unfairly at tournaments and of being harassed by sweat-soaked, chauvinistic male jocks who felt that, wherever a woman's "place" might be, it certainly wasn't on the racquetball court. (For a more detailed examination of the development of women's racquetball, see *Racquetball*, April, 1979.) Things have gotten better for the women, according to the general consensus, and most women players agree—although they will tell you they still have a long way to go.

Now, the junior players are left to bite the bullet, as they strive for acceptance in a sport dominated by adults who are often unsympathetic to the needs of young players. Juniors today echo the same complaints faced by women a decade ago: little or no access to court time, limited sponsorship of junior players or tournaments, and resistance from adults who resent the intrusion of juniors into "their" (meaning adult-only) club. All of this makes it very difficult for a youngster to get the kind of playing time and experience needed to become a good player.

There are, however, some court club owners who—while not exactly forsaking the dollar—recognize that if they expect the game to continue growing, the development of young players is essential. Ed Martin, owner of the Sun Oaks Racquet Club in Redding, Calif., is one such man. Martin admits that adult memberships are the lifeblood of his club. But he is also wise enough to realize that getting youngsters interested in the game today could mean more adult members for his club tomorrow.

Redding is located about 160 miles west of Sacramento, in an area acknowledged as one of the few hotbeds of junior

racquetball in the nation. And Martin is credited with being part of the reason the area carries that distinction.

"Our club is family oriented," he says. "We sell family memberships and allow both adults and juniors to play at our facilities. I don't like to brag, but our program is showing results. The kids who come out of our program have been dominating play in this area." Earlier this year, for example, Martin took 30 juniors to the IRA Western Regional Tournament in Roseville, a Sacramento suburb. The Redding kids took two first place and four second place prizes at the tournament.

On the Atlantic coast, the Baltimore area serves as another thriving area for junior players. Tom Whipple, part-owner of the Padonia Court Club where young David Simonette practices every evening, is an old tennis enthusiast who has found a new love in racquetball. Whipple devotes several hours a week at his club teaching junior players the fundamentals. Like Martin, he firmly believes that the more time a youngster spends on the court, the better player he will become.

"The problem with developing junior racquetball players," Whipple says, "is the old 'pay as you play' theory which a lot of club owners live by. This concept inhibits (the development of) young players. . . Then parents are not that familiar with the game and therefore they don't push their kids into it like they do in little league baseball, football and in some cases, tennis. Also, because a lot of parents aren't that familiar with the game, they're not going to give their kids money to go play a game they never heard of, at some swanky-looking club out in the suburbs."

This lack of familiarity with racquetball, at least among the general populace, is at the root of many of the difficulties facing the development of junior players. Racquetball enthusiasts often forget that outside of such high-visibility areas as Chicago or St. Louis, even adults have a hard time finding a racquetball court, and for youngsters in these areas getting adequate playing time is like trying to outrun a Marty Hogan serve. Also, unlike tennis—which boasts thousands of public courts nationwide—public racquetball courts are still few and far between. Indeed, the relative success of junior racquetball in California is probably due in large part to

"Many adults resent the intrusion of juniors into 'their' (meaning adult-only) club. This makes it very difficult for a youngster to get the kind of playing time and experience needed to become a good player."

the fact that that state, and particularly southern California, has more outdoor public courts than just about anywhere else in the country. (See *Racquetball*, May, 1979.)

Public ignorance of racquetball also spills over into another area important to young players: the schools. Only a handful of elementary and high schools in the U.S., public or private, offer racquetball as an intermural sport. Those that do often require youngsters to pay their own expenses, thus limiting the number of participants (and, incidentally, further contributing to racquetball's reputation as an "elitist" sport). And while professional tennis matches are frequently telecast world-wide, racquetball's television exposure all-too often consists of a one-minute spot on a local sportscast, or in a commercial where a sweaty player chugs down a soda while holding a racquet limp at his side. Neither of these images is likely to inspire any potential Jerry Hilechers or Shannon Wrights who might be watching to rush out to the nearest racquetball court.

Still, current odds notwithstanding, progress is being made in various parts of the country in improving the status of junior players. Part of this is due to the efforts of court club owners like Whipple and Martin, who have both instituted programs designed to encourage young players' participation in the sport. Martin, who is also the IRA's national junior commissioner, stresses the importance of family memberships at his club.

"The family memberships have a two-fold purpose," he says. "They get the entire family, especially the juniors, involved in the game. Plus, the family memberships mean a monetary saving which lessens the strain on the pocket. And every time we have a tournament at our club, we have a junior division. Tournaments are a great way to sharpen a player's game."

"We also sponsor a free clinic for kids within a 50-mile radius of Redding. Then there is a lot of 'dead-court time,' as we call it, when the courts aren't being utilized because the adults are still at work or haven't arrived for the prime hours. We let the kids play during these hours, usually for half price or free, depending on the day of the week."

Martin's efforts with the juniors have paid off in the development of players like Mona Mook. Last year, Mona won

the IRA's California State Championships for the 15 years old and under division. She went on to finish second in her division in the 1978 IRA National Juniors Championships and has also won several local tournaments. Martin likes to call her the "Terror of Redding." Mona, on the other hand, simply giggles when the title is mentioned.

"I used to live across the street from Mr. Martin's club," she recalls. "Sometimes I'd go over and watch people play. Then they began to notice me watching and finally talked me into playing."

That was some two years ago and marked the first time Mona had played racquetball. It wasn't long, though, before she started to make a name for herself around the courts. "I picked it up real easy," she says. "Now I'm better than most of the guys I play. I'm even beating some of the women players."

Being 16 and a racquetball nut has caused a few problems for Mona. "None of my friends play racquetball," she explains, "so I don't get a chance to see them very much. I'm never free on weekends anymore, so my boyfriend isn't too happy about it. And I'm having a hard time in school because I play so much racquetball."

But the time Mona spends on the court has made her a legitimate champion and one of the hottest young racquetball prospects in the country. She plays—and wins—regularly, and she is fully aware of just how fortunate she has been compared to most juniors. "I don't think I could pay for the court time if Mr. Martin didn't allow us to play free," says the pretty Enterprise High School sophomore. "In a lot of clubs they don't let juniors play at all. There are several places in San Diego where you can't play unless you're 18 years old or accompanied by an adult. On Sundays you can't play at all." Such is the lot of most aspiring young racquetball players, and Mona makes no qualms about harboring some resentment for what she calls "second-class treatment" of junior players at most clubs. "Yeah, I resent it a lot. I don't see how they can expect juniors to be good if they don't let us play."

The Rating Game

In preparation for next month's IRA National Juniors Championships, the editors of *Racquetball* magazine decided to go out on a limb and publish our rankings list of the top players in the tournament. These aren't iron-clad predictions, mind you, but just sophisticated "guesstimates" based on the player's past tournament performance. Come next month, you'll know (and so will we) just how far off we were. So here goes.

Boys 17-and-under

1. John Egerman—Boise, Idaho; the odds-on favorite in this division and last year's winner in the 15-and-under category. How good is he? Well, as of press time, Egerman had advanced to the finals of the Men's Open division in the IRA World Amateur Singles Championships. Good enough?

2. Doug Cohen—An up-and-coming young player from St. Louis.

Boys 15-and-under

1. Greg Peck—El Paso, Tex.; advanced to the semifinals in this division last year.

2. John Amatulli—Meadowdale, Ind.; eliminated in the second round last year.

Boys 13-and-under

1. Darin Eyring—Mercer Island, Wash.; advanced to the finals of the 12-and-under division last year, losing in two close games.

2. Eric Scheyer—Glencoe, Ill.

Boys 10-and-under

1. David Simonette—Baltimore, Md.; Maryland state 10-and-under champion; a scrappy, determined player.

2. Andy Gross—St. Louis, Mo.; advanced to the quarterfinals of the 12-and-under division last year.

Girls 17-and-under

1. Leslie Lindskog—Olympia, Wash.; the surprise winner in this division last year and the top seed for this year's tournament.

2. Andrea Katz—Norfolk, Va.; lost to Lindskog in the quarterfinals last year.

Girls 15-and-under

1. Mona Mook—Redding, Calif.; California state 15-and-under champion; placed second in this division at last year's junior nationals.

2. Liz Alvarado—Odessa, Tex.

Girls 13-and-under

1. Lisa Anthony—Redding, Calif.; placed third in the 12-and-under division last year.

2. Tracy Daley—Quincy, Mass.; placed fifth in this division last year.

Girls 10-and-under

1. Rodie Martin—Redding, Calif.

2. Delaine Comer—Redding, Calif.

“One idea being considered is that of getting school officials to bring their physical education programs to racquetball clubs. The schools would offer racquetball as a physical education course and the classes would be taught at a local court club.”

Tom Whipple also likes to brag about the players his club has developed on the east coast. He points to young Steve Ginsberg, 15, of Pikesville, Md., the United States Racquetball Association's Northeast Regional champ in his division. He also likes to talk about rising stars like 14-year-old Ira Miller, also of Pikesville, and of course, David Simonette.

Young David is a soft-spoken youngster whom one would never suspect of being a competitive, aggressive racquetball player. It's difficult to get him to talk about himself and he seems bewildered by all the attention he has been receiving of late. Yet, in the short 18 months that David has been playing racquetball, he has swept his division in Maryland and established himself as *the* player to beat in his age bracket in the upcoming IRA nationals. Last year, a diminutive, nine-year-old David Simonette, playing in the 12-and-under division at the IRA junior nationals, captured the hearts of the spectators with his skill, determination and good humor. In a way, David exemplifies all the exuberance, enthusiasm and excitement of junior racquetball.

Whipple says David is part of his club's "team concept" of playing racquetball. "We teach these three kids (Simonette, Ginsberg and Miller) once a week," he says, "along with other kids. We try to instill the team concept in them."

One idea that Whipple and other club owners are considering is that of getting high school and college officials to bring their physical education programs to the clubs. The schools would offer racquetball as, say, a physical education distributive and the classes would be taught at a local court club. This could provide young players with playing experience and could lead to more widespread intermural racquetball competition on the junior level.

The national racquetball associations have also made efforts in recent years to beef up the participation of young players. The IRA, for example, has had a junior division since 1971. It offers eight age divisions for junior players: boys and girls 17-and-under, 15-and-under, 13-and-under, and 10-and-under. Junior competitors are allowed to compete in a division citing their age as of the previous January 1.

Luke St. Onge, the IRA's executive director, says about 15

per cent of the association's members are under 18 years old. Juniors have been given a voting voice in the association's decision making process. That move led directly to the addition of a 10-and-under division in tournament competition. And in response to increasing incidences of eye injuries, the association recently established a policy requiring juniors to wear "appropriate eye protection" in all IRA-sanctioned tournaments. IRA officials are also trying to develop a computerized ranking of junior players.

"We have made some other moves which we hope will bring the sport to everyone who wants to play, particularly juniors," St. Onge says. "We have endorsed a product called, 'Racquetball Without the Walls.' A ball is attached to a strong rubber band and you use regular racquets to hit the ball back and forth. We're not claiming it's racquetball, but it gives the kids the eye and hand coordination they need."

"Many recreation officials have been exploring outdoor three-wall courts. Of course, here again, it's not racquetball because the back wall and ceiling are gone. But it's another idea that could possibly bring the game to all juniors."

The USRA, too, has begun focusing more attention on junior players. The organization recently clarified a long running dispute over the date a junior player's age becomes effective. The association ruled that the age of a player shall be determined by his or her age on the first day of the regional junior championships, scheduled this year for July 19. USRA officials say this move will eliminate past confusion over a junior's eligibility to play in a certain age division. The USRA also decided to remove the regional junior championships from the rest of the amateur regionals, thus leading up to a separate National Juniors Championship in August. The IRA, meanwhile, conducts its own separate national junior tour-



Mona Mook, the "Terror of Redding (Calif.)," and the top-seeded player in the girls 15-and-under division.

nament, set this year for July 13-15 in Memphis. About 300 junior players are expected to participate in the event.

Both the IRA and USRA national junior tournaments have produced impressive results, sending on to the pro ranks such players as Marty Hogan, Mike Yellen, Lindsay Myers and Ben Koltun. And every year players in the 17-and-under division at both tournaments know that somewhere in the audience potential sponsors are watching, with an eye towards picking up another pro prospect for their stables.

Yet, as far as the average junior racquetball player is concerned, such heady new developments mean little. For while the top junior prospects are reaping the benefits of racquetball's present popularity, it's still lean times for most juniors. Fact is, though most junior racquetball supporters share a shakey optimism about the future of the juniors, some are beginning to question the continued boom of the sport itself if more young players are not fed into the system.

"We'll be all right as long as organizations like the IRA and companies like Wilson (Sporting Goods) and Ektelon continue to hold tournaments and sponsor players," predicts Ed Martin. "But the companies are starting to sing a slightly different tune now, titled 'Don't Lean Too Heavy On Me.'"

One company that is *not* singing that tune—at least, not yet—is Ektelon. The firm co-sponsored last year's IRA national junior tournament and is helping to sponsor the tournament again this year. Last August, Ektelon held its first National Junior Camp in Dayton, Ohio. The camp brought together 20 of the nation's top junior players for a week of instruction from pros Mike Yellen, Jerry Hilecher and Larry Fox (all former national junior champions). In addition, Ektelon currently assists some 15 junior players "to compete at a level higher than they normally would be able to," according to Tom Stofko, Ektelon advisory staff manager. The company pays the

"While the top junior prospects are reaping the benefits of racquetball's popularity, it's still lean times for most juniors. Some people are even beginning to question the continued boom of the sport itself if more young players are not fed into the system."

players' air fare to major tournaments and assists them with equipment and lodging.

"We are willing to invest money in junior racquetball because we feel it's the future of the sport," Stofko says, "and that we'll reap the return from that investment later on. . . It's a



Greg Peck, the number one seed in the boys 15-and-under division.

way for us to return to the players some of the benefits we have received from the sport, and it really gives junior players an incentive to improve their performance."

For most companies, though, sponsorship of junior racquetball is based on somewhat less altruistic motives. "Companies want to know what the return is," explains Bill Torres, promotion manager for Wilson in San Diego. "They want to know how many people are going to watch a match. The question is whether racquetball is a participating sport or really a spectators' sport. We just don't know. When Marty Hogan plays a tournament only 500 people watch. But when Jimmy Connors plays a tournament millions of people are going to see him swinging a Wilson racquet."

Torres says Wilson, which has only recently ventured into the racquetball market, assists five junior players, providing them with clothes, equipment and shoes. The firm is also trying to set up a juniors' program in Miami. But just how far Wilson—and other companies—will go in sponsoring junior racquetball is still very much in doubt.

"The junior program is in limbo now," Torres says. "How many racquets are you going to sell? How many shirts? I for one think sponsorship (of juniors) is worth it. I was a school teacher before I got into this. I've worked with kids all my life and I think racquetball is a great game for them."

Junior players, of course, have heard all this before. But the hard truth of the matter is that without *substantially* increased support from both company sponsors and court club owners alike, the development of junior racquetball is impossible. And that, many observers believe, could be disastrous to the sport itself. These observers fear that without a constant infusion of young players, racquetball could burn itself out, eventually becoming little more than a pastime of old men who yearn for the "good old days" when they—and their sport—were young.

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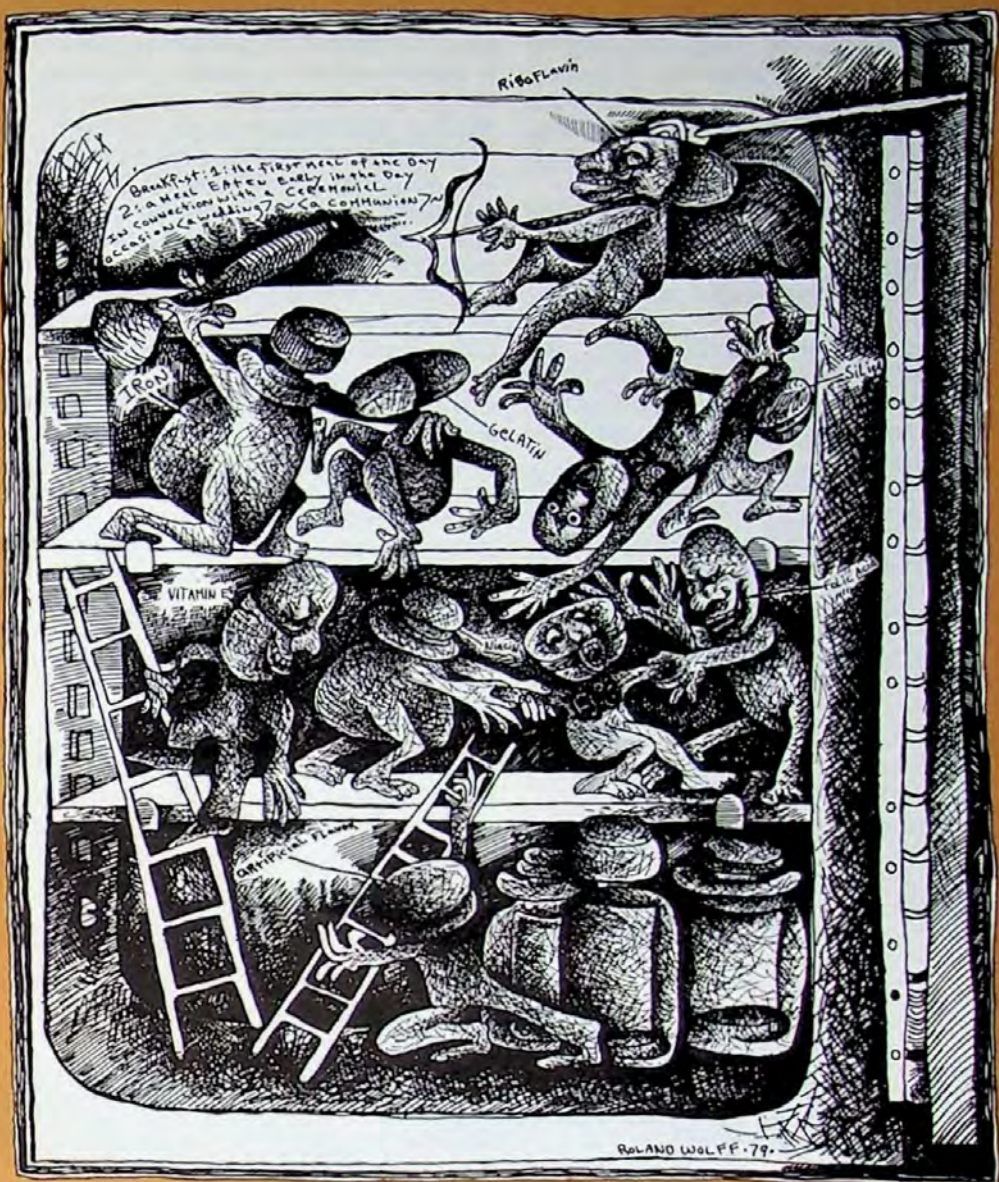
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THE ALPHABET WAR

THE ABC'S OF VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS

BY
TOM MARTIN



Lou is a vitamin freak. You know the type. There's probably a Lou at your office, or maybe at your court club; you might even live with him. (Lou can be any age and is available in either sex.) Lou's the one who makes snide remarks about your juicy hamburger as he spoons a glob of wheat germ into his carrot juice. He's the one who's on his twelfth vitamin pill by the time you've finished your salad. Lou's the one who gobbles down lecithin powder for dessert as you're self-consciously working on a slab of chocolate cake.

Lou loves all kinds of vitamins. "These vitamin C tablets keep away colds, flu, that type of thing," he says, popping in two huge white tablets. "And this is brewer's yeast. . . it gives me my B vitamins. Protein tablets? Well, we all need a little more protein. I like to top it all off with vitamin E. It's great for the circulation."

As you brush the cake crumbs from

your shirt, Lou will probably look at you and say something like: "You know, you really ought to be taking more vitamins. It's just what you need."

Like many other Americans, Lou is convinced that the key to health, good nutrition—and maybe even a better game of racquetball—can be found inside his vast collection of pills, powders and potions. Every day, millions of people—housewives, grandmothers, tycoons, college students, and, yes, even racquetball players—gulp down literally trillions of doses of vitamins and other health supplements. The price tag for this national mania has topped the \$500 million mark, and there seems to be no end in sight. It is estimated that 50 to 60 million Americans take some form of daily vitamin supplement and more than half of all American households keep vitamins on the shelf.

Some of the claims now being made are so fantastic that people are calling vitamins the new wonder drugs. Linus Pauling, a two-time Nobel laureate,

maintains that vitamin C can be effective in controlling or even curing not only the common cold and flu, but also some forms of cancer as well. Two Canadian doctors, Wilfrid and Evan Shute, believe vitamin E to be effective in relieving heart disease. And Irwin Stone, whose book on vitamin C was a best seller, claims that vitamin C can help everything from detached retinas to ulcers.

But a large body of scientists, doctors and nutritionists—a group that includes some of the most distinguished figures in the field of nutrition—strongly feels that vitamins are not the cure-all that many claim them to be. Instead, these representatives of the more established medical and scientific communities maintain that far too little carefully controlled research has been done to substantiate the assertions of Pauling, Stone and company.

These nutritionists contend that most Americans with reasonably good diets get all the required nutrients they need

from food sources alone. In fact, these experts point out that the greatest problem in the American diet isn't vitamin deficiency, but overeating. Americans don't get too little nutrition, these researchers say; rather, they get far too much.

For the athlete in a sport like racquetball, this nutritional debate is especially important. Athletes in all sports have long sought a magic formula—one that, taken daily, could increase stamina, improve agility and even ward off injury and illness. Now some of these athletes are convinced they have found just such a formula in vitamins.

Vitamin... the very word comes from the Latin "vita," meaning life. And throughout history, vitamins have often meant the difference between life and death for millions of people, serving as "miracle cures" for some of mankind's most dreaded diseases: scurvy, beriberi, pellagra, rickets and pernicious anemia. Discovery of vitamin-based cures for these diseases rivaled the discovery of penicillin and smallpox vaccine. It was a proud period for vitamin research.

As these diseases were eliminated one by one, the federal government established minimum daily requirements (MDRs) for most of the different

vitamins. These MDRs are the levels, usually expressed in milligrams, needed to prevent deficiency disease symptoms, with a safe margin that allows for individual differences in body chemistry. The MDR for vitamin C, for example, is 70 milligrams per day, while only 10 milligrams is needed to prevent scurvy.

With the MDRs for most vitamins established, the field of vitamin research entered a fairly quiet period that lasted through the 1960s. In 1970, however, Linus Pauling, winner of Nobel prizes for both chemistry and peace, published a small volume entitled, "Vitamin C and the Common Cold." The book ignited a furor that has lasted until the present time. In the book, Pauling set forth his belief that massive doses of vitamin C could help defeat mankind's most enduring nemesis: the common cold.

Pauling recommended that adults take one gram (1000 milligrams) of vitamin C each day, 14 times the established MDR. He advised individuals who felt a cold coming on to take even more vitamin C. His book was only 109 pages long, and short on proof for his theories, but it was an immediate bestseller, and Pauling became the darling of the talk show circuit.

The medical and scientific establish-

ment, however, was appalled. Here was a man, these authorities argued, whose background was in organic chemistry rather than human nutrition, trying to tell the American public that vitamin C prevented colds. Preposterous, they said. These experts specifically criticized Pauling's lack of controlled studies to document the assertions in his book. They complained that Pauling (and others like him) had not spent the proper time testing his ideas before he published them. The researchers set about to prove by their own careful methods that these brash new theories weren't as solid as the books were claiming.

The results of this period of intense research were mixed, and the debate still continues. While some controlled studies did indicate that vitamin C reduced the length and severity of colds, other tests showed that it did not necessarily or significantly prevent colds from occurring in the first place.

Yet, despite all the controversy surrounding his vitamin theories, Linus Pauling still maintains that athletes in a sport like racquetball would derive many benefits from increasing their intake of vitamin C. "I think everybody should be taking at least one gram of vitamin C a day," said Pauling, when contacted recently at the Linus Pauling Institute in

AMF Voit's truer, bluer,



California. "I take 10 grams a day myself. And athletes in a highly strenuous sport like racquetball would be helped in a couple of special areas."

"You see, vitamin C is required in the synthesis of collagen. And collagen is the main element in connective tissue, the tissue that provides strength for bones, muscles, tendons and so forth. An athlete is subject to muscle strains, torn ligaments and the like, so this increase (in collagen) would enhance the healing process."

Pauling admits that when huge doses of vitamin C are ingested, the excess is simply excreted in the urine. He contends, however, that by spreading out the dosage during the day, much of this waste can be avoided. "I recommend taking vitamin C in four doses of 250 mg. at different times of the day. I also feel that a cheaper brand is just as effective as the more expensive kind."

"I might add that the other benefits of increasing the intake of vitamin C—resistance to colds and flu, a general feeling of well-being, and so on—will be felt by racquetball players, just as they are with others."

Another proponent of megavitamin therapy ("megavitamin" is the term now being used to describe these huge doses of vitamins) is Dr. Roger Williams,

professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Texas. Williams was a pioneer in vitamin research and is credited with isolating two of the B-complex vitamins, pantothenic acid and folic acid. He argues that high doses of vitamins C and E, as well as the B-complex vitamins, can indeed benefit many people. "Racquetball players are just like anybody else," he says. "They have individual needs, and some of them will be helped by increasing their intake of vitamins. The trouble is, it's hard to tell if you are one of the ones who needs extra nutrients."

"Personally, I think the medical community is way behind in the field of vitamin research," Williams adds. "Many doctors and scientists act like these new vitamin theories are some kind of passing fad. But I believe these discoveries are very important, and, quite frankly, the medical establishment has a lot of catching up to do."

(It should be noted here that neither Williams, Pauling nor anyone else interviewed for this story recommends massive doses of three particular vitamins—A, D and K. These fat-soluble vitamins can be retained in the body for long periods of time, and, in large doses, can be very harmful.)

Williams' complaint of stodginess

among doctors and scientists is one heard frequently from those who believe in megavitamins. The medical community is accused of trying to preserve the status quo simply because it is the accepted and traditional path.

But the critics of megavitamin theories counter that controlled studies take time. Dr. John Bieri is one member of the so-called conservative establishment. He serves as chief of the Nutrient Biochemistry Section at the National Institutes of Health in Washington, D.C. Bieri contends that cautious research is the only way to determine the effectiveness of vitamins and other health supplements. "The medical and scientific community doesn't want to advocate anything, vitamin or otherwise, until it has been proven to be effective," Bieri explains. "We've seen absolutely no evidence that athletes in racquetball, or any other sport for that matter, derive any measurable benefit from any kind of megavitamin therapy. Nor do we have any evidence that athletes deplete vitamins to any degree during athletic competition."

"The only major vitamin depletion that has been well researched and documented is a depletion of vitamin C

continued on page 26

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Dothan, AL 36302

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Tempe, Arizona

June 21-24

Illinois State Championships*

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Kay Fisher, Angelo Petitti

Killshot Ltd.

Bloomington, IL

312-745-9400

June 23-25

4th Annual Wilmington Open*

YMCA

Wilmington, NC

Tournament Director:

July 13-15

International Racquetball

Association's National Juniors

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Memphis, Tennessee

Supreme Courts

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Luke St. Onge

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**Missouri Racquetball Association
Championships**

St. Louis, MO.

Contact: Marlowe Phillips

1-314-432-6119

**National Diabetes Celebrity
Racquets Tournament***

Aspen, Colorado

Tournament Director:

Gary Garrison

September 14-16

Courts of Appeal

Staten Island, NY

Harold Wheeler
919-762-3357

June 29-July 1
J.W. Million Classic
Tennis World
Tournament Director: Mir Rahim
Seattle, WA

Voit/Self Magazine
Racquetball Centre
Atlanta, GA

July 12-15
Killshot Ltd.
in Bloomington, IL
Voit/Datsun

August 2-3-4-5
Northwest Summer Classic*
Eastern Washington University
Tournament Director:
Pat Whitehill
509-359-7963

August 3-4-5
3rd Annual Nittany Mountain
Summer Invitational*
Penn State U.
Tournament Director:
Jerry Willey

August 10-12
The Sports Gallery
Anaheim, CA
Voit/Datsun

Voit/Datsun
October 5-7
Franklin Racquet Club
Southfield, MI
Voit/Datsun

November 9-11
Telegraph Hill Racquetball Club
San Francisco, CA
Voit/Datsun

November 16, 17, 18
Nittany Lion Open
Penn State University
State College, PA.

***I.R.A. sanctioned tournaments**

CALENDAR

continued from page 23

that occurs in individuals who are subjected to extreme exertion, at extreme temperatures, for long periods of time. Studies of South African gold miners, for example, have shown that after eight hours of working in 120° temperatures, the miners did show a slight decrease in their serum levels of ascorbic acid (vitamin C). But a supplement of only 100 mg. a day took care of the problem. And I really can't imagine anyone playing racquetball for eight hours at 120°."

Dr. E.R. Buskirk, director of the Human Performance Laboratory at Penn State University, shares Dr. Bieri's feelings. "In the work we've done here," Buskirk says, "we've found that individuals who are exerting themselves in a sport like racquetball don't have too many special needs for vitamins. Primarily, they just need a higher caloric intake, and as an individual eats more food, his vitamin and mineral intake should increase as a result. Of course, that's providing the individual eats a well-balanced diet."

Some nutrition authorities are even more outspoken in their criticism of the various megavitamin claims. Dr. Thomas Jukes, a professor of nutrition at the University of California at Berkeley, has been working in the field of nutrition

for more than 50 years. He resents some of the newly-proclaimed vitamin "experts" and their extreme claims. "We all need vitamins," as Jukes puts it, "but that doesn't mean we have to take a bath in them. You can't give yourself super health just by taking enormous quantities of vitamins."

Jukes doesn't take vitamins himself, but he's still in pretty good shape nevertheless. At 72, he is an avid backpacker who frequently hikes in the Sierra Nevada mountains carrying a 40-pound pack. He attributes his own good health to a balanced diet and exercise. "I was in the mountains last fall," he recounts, "and I was trapped in a snowstorm at 11,000 feet . . . alone. It was a problem, but I made it out. I'll tell you this much, I don't think Linus Pauling could have done it."

The great vitamin debate is likely to persist as long as athletes everywhere strive for faster times, better scores and fewer injuries. The fact is, the experts themselves disagree on the value of vitamin supplements and will probably continue to do so. Still, the vast majority of nutrition authorities seem to believe that far more concrete data must be supplied before they are convinced that vitamins are the panacea that many now claim. As one researcher said dryly: "It is a documented fact that at least with the

water-soluble vitamins, all excess amounts are excreted anyway. I'm of the opinion that the vitamin fanatics have succeeded in doing little more than giving themselves the most expensive urine in the world."

All this is not likely to deter people like Lou, the vitamin freak. Lou and his cohorts will probably go on gulping down buckets of pills as long as they feel they're getting some benefit from them. One nutritionist believes there isn't too much harm in this. "I don't doubt that vitamin supplements provide a definite psychological relief for many people, whether they need them or not," he says. "I see nothing wrong in that."

Perhaps the entire matter was summed up best by Dr. Jean Mayer, professor of nutrition at Harvard for 27 years and now president of Tufts University in Boston. "To me," says Mayer, who served as nutritional advisor for the U.S. Olympic team that competed in the Mexico City games in 1968, "an athlete trying to find the formula for success would do well to learn from the old story of the sightseer in New York City. It seems the tourist walked up to a native New Yorker and asked: 'How do you get to Carnegie Hall?'"

"The unruffled New Yorker's casual reply was simply, 'Practice, practice, practice.' "■

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VATAHA

Ex-Football Player Turns Racquetball Entrepreneur

En route to winning last January's Coors All-Pro Racquetball Tournament in Las Vegas (and picking up a record \$58,000 in prize money), former New England Patriots wide receiver Randy Vataha took a shot to the chin that required 14 stitches. The blow came off the racquet of St. Louis Cardinals kicker Jim Bakken during the first game of a first round match. It was early in the game, three or four points had been played when, as Vataha tells it:

"Jim Bakken started to hit a backhand, so I was coming around him. But then he stepped back and swung all the way around, hit a forehand and caught me in the chin."

After a quick taping on the sidelines, Vataha came back to win that first game 21-6. Between games he went to a nearby hospital where, in 25 minutes, a doctor stitched up the gash in his chin. Vataha then dashed back to the court to eliminate Bakken by an identical 21-6 score.

This story reveals a lot about Randy Vataha. After that shot to the chin, he could have easily walked away from the tournament and no one would have questioned his mettle. But at 5'10", 170 pounds, Randy Vataha didn't survive seven seasons in the National Football League by being a quitter. He's a winner, his friends say, a real "go-getter... who sees what he wants and then goes after it."

That kind of determination helped Vataha overcome the rap of being too small for professional football and then go on to set a pass catching record with the Patriots his rookie season. And now that same spirit is rapidly making him one of New England's best known racquetball entrepreneurs. At age 30, he is the managing partner in a court club management firm that has facilities scattered throughout New England (with more on the way), and which, conservatively speaking, expects to turn about \$8 million next year. And Vataha

has plans, big plans. Indeed, before he is finished, Randy Vataha could well become the Colonel Sanders of racquetball, placing his company's brand on a nationwide network of racquetball clubs.

My main interest is in strictly owning and running racquetball clubs," says Vataha, speaking of the recreation company he manages along with his two partners, Patriots starting center Bill Lenkaitis and George Matthews, a Boston businessman. The firm, LMV (Lenkaitis, Matthews and Vataha) Leisure Time, Inc., is headquartered in Waltham, Mass. Its main activity right now is Playoff Racquetball, technically a LMV subsidiary engaged, as Vataha says, in the business of "owning and running" racquetball clubs.

Playoff Racquetball was formed about two years ago, and Vataha and his partners have been busy ever since. The company already operates two clubs (in Braintree, Mass., and East Providence, R.I.) and expects to have another half dozen or so open by the end of the year. What began as a three-man operation a short two years ago should by next year employ more than 300 people. The business has grown so rapidly that they have already outgrown the old corporate headquarters and recently moved into new office quarters. The new headquarters is three times larger than the old one.

And still, Vataha is looking ahead. On the wall to the left of his desk in the old office was a large map of New England with a dozen or more pins stuck in it. Each pin represented a club the LMV trio either owns, has under construction or is considering taking over. "I've invested my future in the racquetball business," Vataha says with an easy grin, when asked if he is an empire builder. "I enjoy it very much." And little wonder, too. He's already making more money than he ever did while a

football player, and he fully expects to make even more money in the years to come.

Such prospects are bound to generate a certain measure of contentment, even for someone who became interested in racquetball almost by default. In Vataha's native California, The Game was three-wall handball, played outdoors. "Some guys were playing racquetball," he recalls, "but that was considered kind of a sissy's game. If you couldn't play handball, then you played racquetball."

By those standards, Randy was certainly no sissy. He was a handball player and a good one, so good in fact that at one point he was ranked fourth in the California state doubles competition. But when he entered Stanford University in 1969, his interest in handball cooled because he could find no available courts.

So, like millions of others, Randy became part of the tennis boom then underway. Moving to the east in 1971 to join the Patriots, he played tennis two to three hours a day, five days a week to keep in shape during the off season.

Randy's tennis game developed rapidly. He won the NFL players championship three years running beginning in 1975. In the process, he "never lost a set," according to Will McDonough, a sportswriter for the *Boston Globe* who covered Vataha during his six seasons with the Patriots and now meets him occasionally on the racquetball court.

But during training camp for the 1976 season, Lenkaitis and Vataha agreed they would have reported in better shape had they played handball during the off season. They figured they could generate enough interest among other pro football players to support four, maybe five handball courts.

So they began looking for a club, first in New England. "There were no clubs in New England, nothing," says Randy. As they traveled around the country to away games Randy noticed that

By Fletcher Roberts

Fletcher Roberts is a reporter for the *Boston Globe*.

Racquetball 29



"It's a lot tougher to open a club than many people realize. There are a million little details."

"handball was barely anything, but this game called racquetball was going like crazy."

Vataha and Lenkaitis discussed it, figured the odds and pretty soon decided they should invest in a racquetball club. This is where George Matthews enters the picture. Matthews, a partner in a financial group that specializes in reviving old businesses, had been advising the two aspiring entrepreneurs on financial matters, so they invited him to join them in the venture.

"Come the spring of 1977 we had signed all of the papers for the Braintree club and got it all put together," Randy recalls. The club opened officially on October 31 and in 10 days it was sold out—more than 1,400 memberships.

Critics say that Lenkaitis and Vataha couldn't have gotten the financial backing for the club without the "big names" they'd earned as pro football players. For their part, the two former teammates point out that they had to put up part of their deferred income from football to guarantee the deal.

But success, particularly an "instant success" like the Braintree club, just doesn't happen on its own. McDonough remembers that even before the ground was broken for that club, Vataha, Lenkaitis and their wives sold memberships from a "little table and chairs" they set up on weekends at the nearby

South Shore Plaza. "Now how many ball players would do that?" asks McDonough.

"I lived at the club—literally—for the first six months," Randy confesses. "We took a room next door. It's a lot tougher to open a club than many people realize. There are a million little details."

Planning for the second club in East Providence began in the spring of 1978. Even then work had begun on what Vataha refers to as the "master plan."

"We want to set up a network of clubs throughout New England," he explains, the idea being that a member can play in "his" club regardless of where he might find himself in the six-state region. "If a member from Waltham (Mass.) is in Newport (R.I.), he can still play in his club."

Thus far the master plan is proceeding right on course. The East Providence club opened last December to a reception almost as overwhelming as its predecessor. In a little more than a month, 1,800 memberships had been sold. "The reception was just unbelievable," Vataha says.

A Waltham club is expected to open around the middle of September, a club in nearby Beverly, Mass., a month later. Construction has begun or is soon to begin on clubs in Newport; Hartford, Conn.; Warwick, R.I.; Foxborough and Salem, Mass., and the list goes on.

Letting no moss gather under their corporate feet, the trio is negotiating to purchase several existing clubs in Maine which they plan to franchise under the Playoff trademark.

The East Providence club is typical of the Playoff clubs. It features 18 courts, dressing and steam rooms, a whirlpool and an exercise area. A lounge, overlooking two glass-walled tournament courts, serves light meals and alcoholic beverages. Vataha estimates that a "nice club" like this, including land and facilities, runs in the neighborhood of between \$65,000 and \$75,000 per court. The arithmetic on that comes out to better than 1¼ million dollars per club.

Vataha and his partners are willing to shell out that kind of money because of the growing potential of the racquetball market in New England. Five years ago, there were only a handful of racquetball players in the area with most courts hidden away in a few YMCA's or college gyms. Today, over 45 court clubs attract nearly 100,000 New Englanders. Racquetball has become for the second half of the 1970s what tennis was for the first half of the decade.

"Right now racquetball is the ultimate game as far as an easy entry is concerned," Vataha explains. "It takes virtually no skill to learn to play and to get good exercise. It doesn't take the year of learning that tennis might require or the five years that golf might."

But while the demographics and the accessibility of racquetball are certainly drawing cards, what really attracts wheelers and dealers like Vataha to the sport is, quite frankly, the money. A single membership in the Playoff clubs costs \$55 a year, with \$85 the going rate for a family membership. Court time is \$8 an hour during peak hours and \$6 an hour off peak time. Instruction costs \$10 an hour. Throw in the cost of a racquet and accessories and a racquetball neophyte could lay out a pretty fair piece of change. Vataha, of course, would like nothing better than to have all of that change spent in one of his Playoff clubs, regardless of which city the player might be in when the urge to spend hits.

"Randy saw the light," says Danny Giordano, a sometime court foe of Vataha's and teaching pro at the North Meadow Racquet Club in Tewksbury, Mass. "He saw what was going on early, and now he's making money with it."

Several months before the start of the Coors All-Pro tournament, Vataha told Will McDonough, "I'm going to win this thing." No ifs, ands or buts—just "I'm going to win." But that's the way

Vataha is. He went after the Coors championship like he goes after everything else: determined to win.

He began practicing in earnest right after the Braintree club opened, just 15 months ahead of the tournament. He played constantly, taking on all comers. When national champ Marty Hogan passed through the Boston area on an exhibition tour, Randy even cornered him for a few pointers on his game.

Vataha's persistence paid off. In the months preceding the tournament in Las Vegas, he knocked off four opponents (see *Racquetball*, Nov.-Dec., 1978) to qualify along with Bakken as pro football's entries in the championship. And the rest is history.

"I set my goals on this," Vataha says of winning the Coors tournament. "It was completely, 100 per cent myself. My own preparation. . . There was no 'if' the quarterback overthrew it. Or 'if' they fumbled the snap; it was none of that. Either I did it or I didn't."

Vataha has always been a fighter. Take the time in 1971, for instance, when he was drafted in the 17th round by the Los Angeles Rams. The reason he went so late in the draft, in spite of a spectacular collegiate record at Stanford, was that the pro scouts felt Randy was just too small to play professional football. Sure enough, Randy was waived by the Rams 10 days before the start of the season.

But Randy was confident that he could play pro ball and talked the Patriots front office into giving him a shot at making the team. "I just ran a couple of plays and they decided to keep me," he recalls. At New England, he was reunited with Heisman Trophy winning quarterback Jim Plunkett, the Pat's top draft pick with whom Randy had played at Stanford.

His rookie season, Vataha caught 51 passes, setting a Patriots record that remains unsurpassed. In the season finale, he caught an 88-yard bomb to score the winning touchdown against arch-rival Baltimore. That put an end to talk about his being too small to play with the pros.

The hustle, drive and determination that made Vataha a winner on the football field are now paying dividends in the board room. He's the acknowledged mastermind behind the success of the Playoff clubs. Says Lenkaitis, "Randy's great at getting things done and looking down the road."

On a typical day, Randy arrives at his Waltham office around 7 in the morning. His schedule is crammed with meetings, telephone conversations about business deals and visits to his clubs. His work day seldom ends before 6 or 7 in the evening, and then he often returns home for more telephoning or drives to a nearby town



"We may even run sailboats out of a dock. We'll do whatever comes along as a good business venture."

meeting where a building permit is being discussed.

He still tries to actually play racquetball once or twice a week. When he plays, his opponents are as often as not business acquaintances, like Joe Hollman, who manufactures court panels in Oregon. His playing time is often interrupted by invitations to inspect a potential site for a new club.

"Randy's the kind of guy who has a tremendous amount of energy," says McDonough. "He can be on the go from 6:30 in the morning to midnight and then up again the next day and never seems to be tired." Putting the Playoff logo on the map requires a lot of hard work.

Nowadays, Vataha is spending a lot of time learning the principles of business. What others haven't taught him, he has had to learn on his own out of necessity. "We have a very good accountant and I spend time with him," Randy says, "and somehow I now understand what a financial statement is and I understand what a balance sheet is."

Vataha has already gained enough business savvy to know that in order to stay on top, he has to start looking ahead. He keeps a sharp eye on future trends in the racquetball business and predicts that the "mainstay" of the

current building boom will end within a year or two.

As a hedge against that possibility, Randy and his partners want to branch out into an area he calls "recreation management." For the most part, he feels, recreational facilities in New England have been run by amateurs. Vataha would like to change that. "We want to run these things professionally," he says. "We want to understand the business; we want to get involved." And like their clubs, the guys from LMV want to run the whole show. "We run the food service; we run the lounge. We run everything."

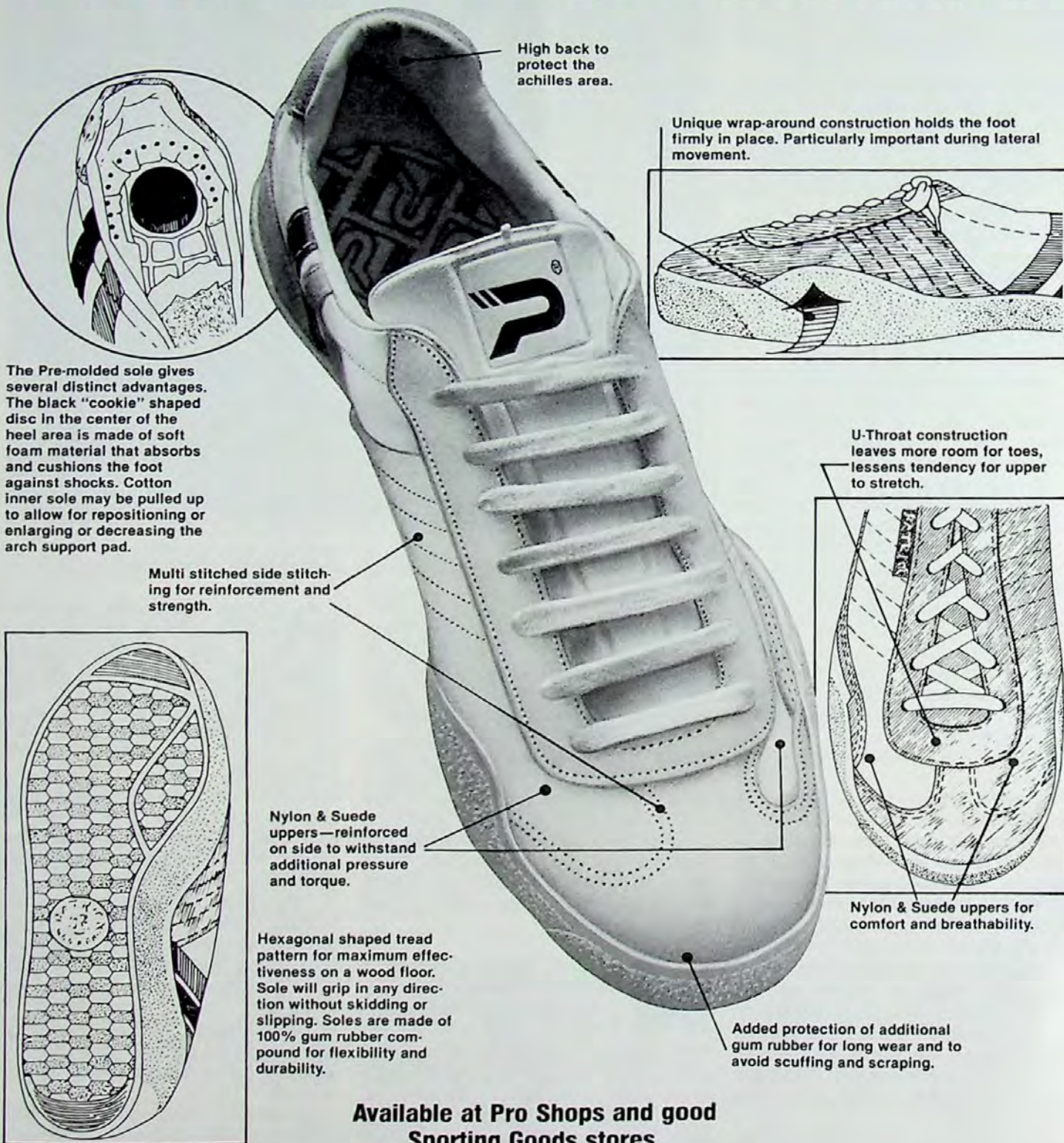
"Racquetball is the entree into that market," Randy continues. "That's building us capital, dollars we can work with and a base of reputation." But Vataha predicts that the company may eventually move into tennis or skateboarding or "we may even decide to run sailboats out of a dock. We'll do whatever comes along as a good business venture."

Eventually, Vataha would like LMV to become "the number one company in recreation. That's a tall order because there are some real heavies in there, but that's where we'd like to head."

A tall order indeed. But then, for someone like Randy Vataha, tall orders just take a little longer. Go get 'em, Randy. ■

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REPORT

It's Memphis State—Again

SOUTHERN POWERHOUSE CAPTURES IRA INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIP

By Judy Heinrich



Mike Gora (Left) and Pete Tashie (Center) of Memphis State, winners of the Men's Doubles.

Memphis State University continued its dominating ways in college racquetball during the 7th annual IRA National Collegiate Championships, held April 27-29 in Memphis. Though most of its big guns from last year's championship team had graduated, the Memphis State powerhouse nevertheless fielded a whole new set of talented players at this year's tournament and once again captured the overall team championship.

The tournament, sponsored by the Pabst Brewing Company, was held at Memphis' Supreme Courts Racquetball/Handball Club. Eighty players, representing 16 universities, participated in the event.

Although some of the schools represented have university-sanctioned

(and funded) racquetball teams, most operate at the club level, with player-members paying dues and holding their own tournaments to raise traveling money. One notable exception is the Air Force Academy which, thanks to the influence of its powerful woman player, Barbara Faulkenberry, has reversed a long-standing "no racquetball team" position and not only started a team, but actually made racquetball a required course for all students.

It was a tribute to the dedication of the players that most footed all or part of the bill for getting to Memphis. The University of Illinois lent its nine representatives a school van, but the gas and lodging came out of the players' pockets. Others were less fortunate: Dave Clark of the University of Texas-

Arlington bought his own airplane ticket while Don Pike of Oral Roberts University shared a long drive from Tulsa with his wife.

The excitement of the tournament was enhanced by the frequent presence of local television crews who came out all three days to film highlights for their newscasts. For many of the players it was their first experience with this type of coverage, and a welcome sign that racquetball is coming into its own as a sport with spectator appeal.

All of the players couldn't take home a winner's plaque, but there were other forms of compensation and fun for both winners and losers. The well-stocked hospitality room provided a convenient place for congratulations and analyses, and the Gatorade and Pabst beer flowed freely all weekend. On Saturday night the club was the scene for a party, complete with musical entertainment and some of the best pork barbecue (naturally) in this southern city widely acknowledged as the barbecue capital of the world.

The food, the fun, the competition—all contributed to making the IRA National Collegiate Championships a terrific tournament. Here's how the individual divisions wound up:

Men's A

The major upset in this division came in the second round when unseeded Dave Clark of Texas-Arlington overpowered second-seeded Jeff Siegel of the University of Arizona, 21-11, 18-21, 15-9. Siegel is a hard hitter with a tough reputation, but he couldn't put it together to overcome Clark, who was placing his shots very well. Siegel appeared determined to make a comeback in the tie-breaker and became visibly upset when he skipped the ball twice in a row in crucial rallies. Clark, on the

other hand, remained unflappable. That cool attitude got the credit for winning him the match: "My level of confidence was higher than it usually is," he declared. "I just decided I could beat him." A terrific drive serve and good hustle didn't hurt, either.

Clark later lost to Rich Samson of the University of Illinois in the semi-finals (6-21, 21-16, 15-10), but won third place in the division by defeating Ken Groves of Oklahoma State 19-21, 21-12, 15-8.

Samson of Illinois and top-seeded Keith Dunlap of Memphis State were squared off for the finals. Dunlap had been considered a shoo-in by some, but had faced a surprising potential upset in the quarterfinals against lanky Charlie Willingham of Cameron University in Oklahoma. Willingham took the first game of that match 21-19, with the usually dominating Dunlap struggling to find a shot that worked. He apparently found it somewhere between the first and second game, which he took 21-6. The tie-breaker was all Dunlap, 15-0.

Dunlap played his usually forceful game against Rich Samson in the finals. Samson excelled in the soft pinch, but it didn't get him enough points against the hardshooting Memphis State sophomore. "He's such a tough player," conceded Samson after losing 21-11, 21-14. "He just kept rolling them out." Dunlap credited his experience with giving him the edge, as well as the fact that his pass shots were good enough to get by his power-playing opponent.

Men's B

This division had the largest draw (28) and provided exciting action all weekend. The calibre of play was excellent.

Dan Cohen of Memphis State came up to the finals by easily defeating the competition. The term "breezed through" may sound unrealistic: suffice it to say that no one scored more than 15 points per game on him, and a few of his opponents could count up their scores on one hand.

Cohen's challenger in the finals was Tom Farley of Oklahoma State, who had a tougher time in the earlier rounds, winning two of his matches in tie-breakers. That same determination was evident in the finals, but Farley was no match for Cohen, the former Missouri State Juniors Champion. Farley's height should have given him an advantage over the slightly built Cohen, but the smaller player was apparently accustomed to overcoming that handicap with excellent shot control. The final score was

21-3, 21-14. The disappointed Farley explained, "I just didn't get started well and he's such a good player I couldn't come back."

Cohen attributed his win to his serve and the fact that he was shooting well. "I skipped a lot of backhands before the finals, but I was lucky today. I didn't give a lot of points away through skipping." Cohen is just a freshman, and will probably be a force in college racquetball for years to come.

Men's Doubles

Seven teams competed in this event and the competition was tough throughout. One of the most exciting matches came late Friday night, with Tom Long and Chris Moore of Memphis State pitted against Brian Titus and John Morris of Auburn. Memphis State took the first game 21-19 and Auburn made a strong finish in the second, taking it 21-20. Both games were close ones, the lead seesawing back and forth. The tie-breaker was even more agonizing, with every rally long and crucial. Memphis State finally took the match 15-13, but only after Auburn had held them at match point twice.

Long and Moore later lost in the semi-finals to Roger Show and Tom Stanger of the University of Illinois (21-17, 21-19), but went on to win third place by defeating Owen Ragland and Art Reingold of Tennessee, 21-10, 21-11.

The finals came down to Pete Tashie and Mike Gora of Memphis State vs. Show and Stanger of Illinois. Show and Stanger had the lefty-righty combination, but that advantage was outweighed by Tashie and Gora's superior on-court coordination. Tashie's drive serve and Gora's "Z" were both coming in well, forcing some weak returns from the usually hard-hitting Illinois men. The first game ended at 21-11 in favor of Memphis State. The second game was very much a repeat of the first, with Tashie and Gora exhibiting better court coverage than their less experienced opponents. Show and Stanger showed fierce determination in the final points of the game, holding the Memphis State team at 19 points for several side-outs. What appeared to be the last point of the game was replayed after some confusion as to whether a hinder had occurred. The replay didn't take long, however, and the game ended at 21-6 on a Tashie specialty: the soft pinch to the left corner.

Women's A Round Robin

The draw in this division was small,

but what it lacked in quantity was made up in quality. The field was further narrowed when Mary Pat Sklenka of Auburn injured her foot in her first match and had to sit out the remainder of the tournament. But she, along with the other spectators, had the opportunity to view some fine women's racquetball.

Barbara Faulkenberry, a first year student (Cadet 4th Class) at the Air Force Academy, was the top seed, and her combination of strength and shot placement left no doubt as to why. In a sport that is sometimes less than graceful, her style and form make her an absolute joy to watch. Even her frequent kills from 35 feet don't appear to demand much exertion.

Barbara rolled over her competition in the early rounds to emerge undefeated for her last match against Sharon Fanning, Memphis State's top woman player. Fanning was also undefeated, and the statistics of their earlier games promised a close match. Unfortunately for Fanning, though, that promise was to be unfulfilled. She showed a lot of determination and hustle, but Faulkenberry ran her mercilessly, tallying up scores of 21-16, 21-6. In commenting about the game, Faulkenberry attributed her win to more experience. "Also, she set it up to my forehand a lot and that's my strong point."

Fanning said that it was a combination of that strong forehand and a killer serve that did her in. "I used up all I had in the first game and just didn't have anything left," she said.

Women's B Round Robin

This division drew the most women, and provided plenty of action all weekend long.

The ultimate winner was Lynn Gebetsberger from the University of Arkansas. A tall woman with good serves and smart shooting, Lynn knocked off all of her competition, limiting her opponents to no more than 12 points apiece against her.

Gebetsberger's height may have been the telling advantage in her early match with Janine Toman of the University of Illinois, who finished second in the competition. Toman uses pass shots and determination to overcome her lack of height, but she just couldn't get past Gebetsberger, who seemed to be everywhere at once. Toman's serves also appeared a little shaky in her early rounds and got stronger as the weekend went on. But it was her early match



ALAN ULMER

Barbara Faulkenberry (foreground) of the Air Force Academy against Sharon Fanning of Memphis State in Women's A Finals.



ALAN ULMER

Rich Samson of the University of Illinois (foreground) and Dave Clark of Texas at Arlington in Men's Open Semi-Finals.



BILL HEINRICH

Keith Dunlap of Memphis State in Men's Open Finals.



BILL HEINRICH

Dan Cohen of Memphis State, Men's B winner.



BILL HEINRICH

Jeff Siegel of the University of Arizona (foreground) against Dave Clark of Texas-Arlington in Men's Open.



ALAN ULMER

(Left to Right) Roger Show, Pete Tashie, Tom Stanger, and Mike Gora in Men's Doubles Finals.



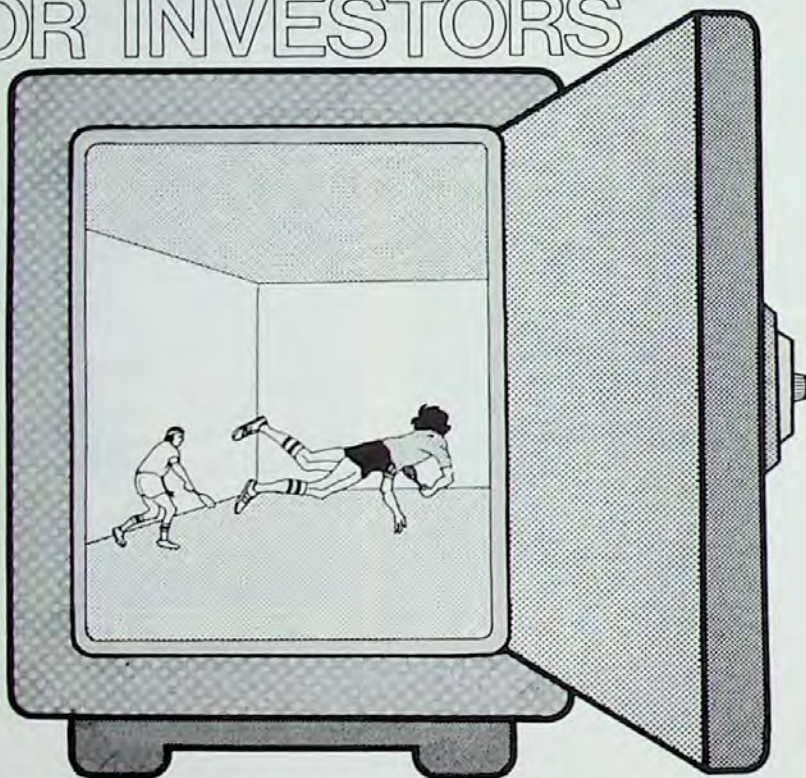
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against Gebetsberger that decided the final outcome of the competition.

Women's Doubles Round Robin

The battle for the women's doubles crown came down to a Sunday match between the undefeated teams of Meg Hooper and Kirsten Conrad of Auburn vs. Candi Gavin and Renee Trammell of Memphis State. Gavin and Trammell had the lefty-righty advantage, but their opponents managed to draw them out of position consistently.

Both games were extremely close, with the lead changing time after time, but the Auburn team managed to put it together when it counted, taking the match 21-16, 21-18. The winners showed better on-court communication, planning their shots to overcome the lefty-righty combination of the Memphis State women. "We ran them around with overhead ceiling shots, trying to get them both hitting with their backhands," said Auburn's Meg Hooper. It was a strategy that worked for the team of Hooper and Conrad.

Team Awards

Memphis State University has been the team to beat for the past five years at the National Collegiate Championships, and this year was no different. They took all three first place team awards: Men's Team, Women's Team and Combined Men/Women Team. The University of Illinois captured second place in all three categories, while Auburn got third place for Women's Team and Oklahoma State got third for Men's. ■

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WINNING POINTS

DRIVE SHOTS

THE OFFENSE SPEAKS

By Mike Yellen

Mike Yellen is the sixth-ranked professional in the country and winner of the Montreal Pro-Am. The 19-year-old Southfield, Mich., native is a member of Ektelon's professional player advisory staff.

Fast and hard, low and accurate, drive shots are an offensive must for any serious racquetball player. They break rhythm and win rallies.

There are two principal kinds of drives and one less effective drive. The most consistently effective drive shots are hummers that move directly parallel to a sidewall. Often as equally effective, though, as the down-the-liners are the cross-court classics which hit the sidewall three quarters of the way back and either bounce twice before reaching the back wall or die at the wall. Least effective but often successful is the screamer hit directly at your opponent, coming too fast for any but a weak return.

There are many advantages to drive shots for players at all levels. Dictating aggressive racquetball, the drive will put your opponent off balance and will make it difficult for him or her to build any kind of rhythm during the match.

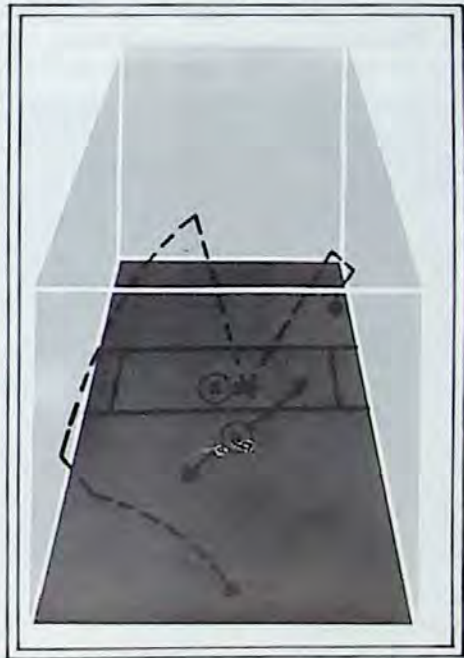
To be specific, the good drive down the line or cross-court will make it impossible for your opponent to get a racquet on the ball, while a drive right at the other player standing close to the service line or mid-court will, hopefully, leave him startled and unable to recover in time for a return.

Concerning the down-the-wall and cross-court drives, these shots don't necessarily have to be play stoppers to be successful. An alternative objective is to move your opponent out of position, thereby forcing a weak return to which you can choose another shot to kill or drive, pinch or roll away.

Now let's have a look at the mechanics of the drive. The most important element of a good cross-court

drive is the angle. It must be wide enough to prevent your opponent—who should be near mid-court—from cutting the shot off and blasting it back at you.

If the angle is even a bit too wide, the ball will rebound off the sidewall too soon and hang far enough in the center of the court for access by your opponent. This



Player A in the diagram has the option of (1) hitting a down-the-wall drive or (2) a cross-court drive, forcing Player B into the back court to retrieve the ball.

will also be the case when the ball is hit too hard and too high, affording the other player a shot from the back wall.

Barring these mistakes, your drive should force your opponent out of center court enabling you to take this coveted position, and put him in the back court trying to hit a ball while he is moving away from the front wall.

A drive which reaches the back wall can also be effective by making your opponent run to back court only to find the ball dead and unplayable. This is only true if the ball is not hit too high.

The same is true of a down-the-wall

drive, which is a little more difficult to execute because the wall tends to inhibit your stroke. But then, your opponent will have the same problem with the ball on its rebound, perhaps worse if the ball is hit correctly. Then it's known as wallpaper.

However, if the ball bites at the sidewall on a down-the-line shot, it may result in a plum for your opponent, for the ball will slow down, change direction and head for middle court. It is worthwhile here to stress again the importance of hitting the ball low. A high ball will certainly reach the back wall, giving your opponent the opportunity of making you the defender.

Of the two most effective drive shots, i. e., down-the-line and cross-court, the former is more difficult to execute precisely. This is because the sidewall cannot be used to slow the ball down in its journey to back court. Therefore it is easier to miscalculate and find the ball coming back from the back wall. The objective is to make the ball hug the sidewall. It must be hit at just the right speed and height, with not even the slightest angle.

The third type of drive is the most ineffective and therefore not used often, unless the opponent is very close to the front wall.

In order for it to be effective, it must come at your opponent at about waist high, slightly to the forehand and very hard. The other player should be in the mid- to fore-court area.

If the ball reaches him too high, he can duck out of the way and pick it up when it comes off the back wall. Too low and he may very likely kill it. But, if it is hit hard enough and in the right spot, it will probably result in a weak return.

This is a very tricky shot, with a low percentage of effectiveness. It is most effective in doubles when a pass may get by one of your adversaries only to be picked off by the other. Most players prefer to shoot away from the opponent, thereby forcing him or her to move out of position and center-court.

Since the cross-court drive is the most effective and easiest to execute, you will encounter this shot more than any other. If it's done well, you haven't a chance, unless you see it coming or anticipate. Then cut it off mid-court with a drive down-the-line.

In general, you should try to take the game to your opponent, mix up your shots and break your opponent's rhythm and balance. Drive shots are a good way to accomplish all of these. ■

PLAYING THE LEFT-HANDER

BEATING THE 'LEFTY PSYCHE'

By Charlie Garfinkel

In a recent racquetball tournament our family doctor was involved in a championship match that he was heavily favored to win. Unbelievably, he had lost the first game 21-17. He was losing the second game 17-10.

At this juncture I yelled from the gallery, "Play his backhand." He replied, "I am." I yelled back, "No, you're not!"

Suddenly he realized that he had been playing a left-hander. He had been playing the lefty's forehand the entire match. He went on to lose 21-17, 21-13.

When I talked to the doctor the next day I asked him, "Why did you keep playing your opponent's forehand?" Incredulously, he replied, "I thought he was a right-hander. I never really watched him when he was warming up. I just naturally assumed that I was hitting to his backhand once the match began."

I also asked him what went through his mind when he realized that he was playing a left-hander and not a right-hander. He replied, "I felt as if I were dreaming. I felt feelings of frustration, anger and embarrassment. I tried to get back into the match but I was mentally destroyed. I couldn't believe what I had been doing. When the match was over, I sat in the locker room for over half an hour. I tried to rationalize what I had done."

Understand, now, that our family doctor is an extremely fine player and is known for being crafty and shrewd on the court. Yet, it took him almost 40 minutes to realize that he was playing a left-hander. (Perhaps it's time for me to change doctors.)

I think this story aptly illustrates the effect a left-hander can have on his opponent. The lefty "mystique," or the lefty "psyche" if you prefer, is definitely for real—at least as far as the person playing him is concerned.

Many players, in fact, actually go into a match against a left-hander defeated

before they start. They envision all sorts of changes in their games and uncanny shots by their opponents, and have a general feeling that it just isn't fair for them to be playing a lefty.

Much of this feeling, the lefty psyche notwithstanding, stems from the simple fact that playing a left-hander is different. A lefty's strengths and weaknesses are the reverse of what one normally en-



Bud Muehleisen (foreground), one of racquetball's premier left-handers.

counters on the racquetball court, and this difference can have an unsettling effect on your game plan.

When you play a right-hander, for example, you want to serve and hit most of your shots to his backhand. But hitting the same serves and shots to a left-hander will place them on his forehand, his most powerful stroke. As for your passing shots, these are usually hit with more strength and power from your forehand. And when you're playing a right-hander this is a hard shot for him to return because it falls on his backhand. For a left-hander, though, it is an easy forehand to return. Of course, if you try to pass with your backhand, you will be hitting to the lefty's backhand. But since most players' backhands are their weaker

shots, passing shots from the backhand side may prove ineffective against a left-hander because you're not hitting them with enough power.

And what is more frustrating than trying to hit ceiling balls that must travel to the backhand of a left-hander? When you play a right-hander almost every ceiling ball is hit from your backhand to his backhand side. Against the left-hander, though, you're constantly having to change your stroke on this shot.

All of this makes playing a left-hander difficult. It does *not*, however, mean that it's impossible to play such an opponent—and beat him. All it takes is a little preparation, strategy and counter-psychoing.

To begin with, you must prepare yourself mentally to play a left-hander. You must approach the match with a positive attitude, rejecting notions about the invincibility of a left-hander. You *can* beat this guy. You may have to adjust certain parts of your game to suit the type of player you're up against, but adaptability is the sign of a good player. And a good player is tough to beat, regardless of which hand he plays with.

One of the best ways to prepare for playing a left-hander is to practice with as many such players as possible. This will give you an excellent idea of what shots to select and use against them. Even more importantly, you will become accustomed to the different directions that you must usually hit the ball when you are playing the left-hander.

If you can't play many left-handers in practice, then play against some right-handers as if they were left-handers. When you serve the ball, serve to their forehands. When you hit a ceiling ball, hit it to your opponent's forehand. Of course, you're hitting to your opponent's strength. But, in doing so, you are getting the proper feeling for playing against left-handers. And if you can cope with the right-hander's strength, you should score many points against a left-hander by hitting to his weakness.

Remember this: left-handers themselves don't like to play other left-handers. They too must change their strokes.

Indeed, if a lefthander has an advantage in a tournament against a right-hander of equal ability, it probably has more to do with practice and experience than any particular style of play. This is because a right-hander may not play against a lefty until his third or fourth match. The lefty, meanwhile, is usually

"You must prepare yourself mentally to play a left-hander. Approach the match with a positive attitude... You can beat this guy."

well-prepared for his right-handed opponent because he has played *only* right-handers in order to advance in the tournament. He doesn't have to change his strokes. That's why it's so important to get practice in playing left-handers before the tournament.

Playing the Lefty

When you begin to serve against a left-hander, take plenty of time on each serve. Look to see where your opponent is before you serve. This will show him that you know where he's standing, as opposed to a right-hander. It will also help you to relax and could cause your opponent to become restless and uneasy.

Be sure that you are serving from the middle of the court. This is wise because you'll be able to move easier to return any shot that the receiver hits. Many players make the mistake of moving far to the left of the service box when they serve against the left-hander. They do this because they feel they will be serving at an acute angle to the left-hander's backhand.

The main problem with this type of serve is that your opponent may have an easy return. If he does, he merely has to hit the ball straight down the line. And even though the return is hit down your forehand side you're stuck over on the far left side of the court. The shot will be almost impossible to return. If you were serving from the middle of the court, however, you would not have so far to move.

As for the types of serves to use against a left-hander, I would vary them greatly. Why allow your opponent to get set for the same serves every time?

On your first serve you should hit drive and z-serves. I would use both soft and hard z-serves. I'd vary both the speed and height of each z-serve. On the second serve, I'd hit a slow z-serve or a high lob. I especially like z-serves

because they have a tendency to jam the left-hander against the sidewall. This serve can prove very frustrating to your left-handed opponent.

Most of your serves will be served to the left-hander's backhand. Occasionally it will be wise to place some serves to the forehand side. This will prevent your opponent from continuously moving to his backhand side.

When he's serving, the left-hander will probably place most serves to your backhand side. The usual return in this situation is to hit the ball to the ceiling. Another good return, however, is to hit it straight down the wall. Now you're probably thinking, "Hey, that shot is going to go to my opponent's forehand." So what? If you hit the ball correctly, your left-handed opponent isn't going to put it away and you can set up for the next shot. The hard cross-court shot is also an effective return. By using this return, you will be moving the server out of the strategic center court position.

After returning serve, it's best to hit two or three ceiling balls to your opponent's forehand side. By first hitting balls to his forehand you have opened up the court, so that when you do hit the ball to his backhand side he will have to scamper over to make a good return. Many times he will return a ceiling ball that lands in the middle of the court or falls short. This will give you the opportunity to kill the ball.

This strategy is much better than exchanging cross-court ceiling balls all day. It will keep your opponent guessing as to why you're hitting so consistently to his forehand. He'll find out quickly enough when you do hit suddenly to his backhand.

When you're involved in a rally and you're hitting a wide variety of shots, use the shots that work best for you. If your kill shots, for example, are exceptionally good on both the forehand and backhand sides straight down the

line, then these are the shots to use.

The lefty, of course, will give you plenty of room to shoot your backhand straight down the line. What he is saying is: "Go ahead; shoot the ball. You're hitting right into my forehand strength." My advice is to go ahead and take the shot. You'd shoot it against the right-hander, so shoot it against the left-hander, too. Don't worry about his forehand strength. If you roll the ball out as you normally do the left-hander cannot possibly return it. Besides, if you tried to shoot cross-court you'd be changing your stroke. You could then make an error or give your opponent an easy return. So it's best not to change the direction of your kill shots.

Passing shots, however, are another matter, and this is one instance where you may want to change the direction in which you normally shoot this shot. The time to pass, of course, is when you catch your opponent leaning too far to one side. Make sure, though, that your shots don't ricochet off the back wall.

You may want to use other shots, such as the pinch or sidewall shots. These are very effective when you are in front of the lefty. If hit correctly, the ball breaks very sharply before the lefty has a chance to react. As for overheads, drop shots and volleys (a ball hit in the air before it bounces), I'd only use these shots when you have what appears to be a sure opportunity.

The message in all this is simple: when playing a left-hander, play *your* game. Adjust to the situation, of course, but don't be intimidated into playing the lefty on his own terms. Shoot your shots when you have it. If you don't have the shot that you want, be patient. Go to the ceiling or hit cross-court passing shots to move your opponent out of center court. Remember, a lefty is no superman or mystic figure. He's simply a player who happens to hold his racquet in a different hand. No more, no less. ■

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Ektelon Wins Award

Ektelon, a San Diego-based manufacturer of racquetball racquets and accessory equipment, has been selected as the winner of the *Sporting Goods Dealer's* 1978 Leadership Award for a specialized manufacturer.

The Sphinx-like trophy was presented to Ektelon president and founder, Bud Held, by *Sporting Goods Dealer* publisher-president, Mike Hadley, at a recent dinner.

Ektelon was honored for its work with retailers in the promotion of racquetball through the distribution of educational materials and point-of-purchase sales aids, and for its support of racquetball on both the amateur and professional levels.

Selections for the annual awards, now in their 18th year, are made from the nominations of other manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and sales representatives.

Sporting Goods Dealer, one of the oldest sporting goods publications in the country, is a Times-Mirror Company.

The End of 'Tennis Elbow?'

As every weekend racquetballer knows, "tennis elbow" is not limited to tennis players. Rather, it's a malady common to all racquet sports, along with sore ankles, knee pain and the like. All of these ailments can definitely hurt your game, not to mention your body.

But now you can beat "tennis elbow," or at least that's the word according to the DonJoy company of California. The firm offers a line of protective gear known collectively as the "Warm-Up Sleeve." Made of a material called neoprene (the same material used in "wet suits"), each sleeve is hand cut and sewn. The sleeves fit over vulnerable joint areas to provide constant warmth and support. This, according to the manufacturer, helps prevent and relieve the pain of minor joint inflammations. The sleeves are also elastic, which provides for maximum flexibility during play.

The Warm-Up Sleeve comes in five sizes: knee, elbow, ankle, wrist and back. For more information, contact DonJoy, P.O. Box 817, Carlsbad, Calif. 92008. Phone: 714-729-1730.



Moving Up

Thomas R. O'Brien has been appointed director of sales for Omega Sports, a St. Louis-based producer of racquetball racquets and accessories.

O'Brien, 36, has previously served as general manager of the Glove and Racquet in Canton, Ohio, and also as director of field development for Court Development Systems, Inc., in Canton.

With Omega, O'Brien will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing Omega's direct sales efforts as well as the company's relationship with its manufacturers' representatives. He is headquartered at Omega's general offices in St. Louis. ■

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New Court Club Openings

Brunswick, Ohio

The Courtrooms I Racquetball Club has opened in Brunswick on Industrial Parkway North, just off I-71 and Route 303.

The club features nine racquetball/handball courts, (including two glass wall courts), a supervised nursery, a 15-station Universal Gym and a cocktail lounge overlooking the glass courts.

Club programs include regular clinics and leagues, exercise classes and private lessons. Janet Thomas is program director.

St. Joseph, Missouri

Spaulding Racquetball Clubs, Inc., of St. Louis, Mo., has opened its first club in the St. Joseph area at 2808 Pembroke Lane.

The club features 10 racquetball/handball clubs, saunas, whirlpools and an upper level viewing gallery. Scott Lucas is the club manager.

Members of the St. Joseph club are entitled to reciprocal membership privileges with the 18 other Spaulding Clubs nationwide. Spaulding also offers a free trial of one hour of court time to anyone who has never played racquetball.

Diamond Bar, California

Diamond Racquetball, a \$1-million court club to be located in the Walnut Valley area, is now under construction at 23425 Sunset Crossing in Diamond Bar.

The Club will feature 12 racquetball courts, including two with floor-to-ceiling glass back walls to allow viewing by spectators in a 170-seat tiered arena. Other features include a lounge with a full-view television screen, saunas and a refreshment center.

Special events will also be held, including club trips to sporting events (such as Rams and Dodgers games, professional racquetball tournaments, etc.), disco dance lessons and amateur

tournaments for all age levels and groups.

The club is scheduled to open August 1, but membership applications are now being accepted at the construction site, located just east of Diamond Bar Boulevard. Pre-opening memberships are available for \$125 for a single adult, \$175 for a family. Monthly dues will be \$25 single, \$40 for the family.

Springfield, Missouri

The Sunshine Racquetball Club has opened at 3534 E. Sunshine in Springfield. The club sold out its 1,000 limited memberships within two months of its grand opening.

Features include eight racquetball courts designed around a large, park-like courtyard, with an observation balcony accessible to all courts. A whirlpool and cooling pool are set in the middle of the courtyard with plants, trees and canopy tables surrounding the yard. A large moveable bar is open in the evening and a juice bar is open all day.

Private lessons and clinics are available, along with exercise programs. A weight room is scheduled to open this summer. ■

Ektelon -Tred 2 Sponsor IRA National Juniors

Ektelon and Tred II will sponsor the IRA National Juniors Tournament to be held from July 13 through 15 in Memphis.

We are very pleased to have been invited to participate in such a worthwhile event," said Ron Grimes, Ektelon vice president for marketing. "We put the support of junior player development very high on our list of racquetball priorities."

Tred II is a San Jose-based manufacturer of athletic shoes. Director of Promotions Hans Albrecht called the IRA Juniors one of the most important elements in the continued growth of racquetball.

"It is at this level," he said, "that the future of the sport is decided."

The tournament, which will be held at the Supreme Courts, will feature both free transportation to Memphis for the winners of IRA regional events and an open invitation for any junior in the country to qualify.

"We would like to give as many top juniors as possible an opportunity to participate," said Luke St. Onge, IRA Executive Director. "That's one reason why we are so happy to have the Ektelon and Tred II sponsorship."

"No one else in the industry has shown themselves to be so dedicated to the support of junior player programs."

In order to further make competition accessible to younger players, said St. Onge, the IRA will introduce for the first time 10-and-under age divisions for both girls and boys.

Other divisions will include 17-and-under, 15-and-under and 13-and-under for both girls and boys based on the participant's age as of January 1, 1979.

For the safety of the players, eye protection during competition will be mandatory. The new Ektelon Speedflite racquetball will be the official tournament ball.

Scorecard

RACQUETBALL welcomes all tournaments to report their results. Please list all rounds of each event. Scorecard will report as many rounds of each tournament as space allows.



Bob Folsom (left) of Portland, Maine and Dr. Bud Muehleisen (right) of La Mesa, California.

1979 IRA MASTERS SINGLES INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT Jacksonville Racquetball Club Jacksonville, Fla.

There is no other tournament like it. The National Masters Invitational hosted in 1979 by Dr. Gordon Ira, Jr. at his Jacksonville Racquetball Club combined competitive racquetball and good fellowship. Where else could you see "Dr. Bud" of San Diego getting a lesson in court 8 from Jordan Teplitz of Chicago? The "Peoples Rocky" came out swinging and made shots that were out of his mind and body - yes, "Rocky" lost 12 to 21, but he had Dr. Bud talking to himself and laughing with the crowd and letting Jordan play a match he will never forget. Or "Sudden Sam" Poletta of Buffalo getting best wishes from all of the women from past tournaments. Because of the Round Robin format, all players had nine matches in three days with the show stopper being the finals Sunday for first place on the tournament court where Dr. Bud staged a comeback to defeat Al Ferrari 21 to 20 for the number one medal. Ferrari was leading all the way and missed a plum at 20-14. From then on, he tried to capitalize on Dr. Bud's mistakes, but the good doctor didn't make any and the title

for the third straight year stayed with him.

The Annual Masters Meeting was held at the Saturday night banquet, and it was decided to expand the number of players for the 1980 tournament to 40, and to have the Singles Tournament on February 22-24 in San Diego. Dr. Bud will be the host, and Amos Rosenbloom will be the chairman for the year. The Masters Doubles Invitational will be held at Ivan Bruner's Club and will be the middle weekend in August.

The tournament is truly one of a kind in that there are no referees, everyone plays the same number of games and usually everyone receives a trophy. This tournament is characterized by comradery and fellowship, characteristics which the Masters have vowed adamantly to protect. This year the players received a gold pendant, produced by Tinker & Co. of Orlando, the first 16 of which were numbered. The only sad part about the whole weekend for most of the players was returning to below zero weather and one of the worst winters in history from the 75 degree balmy Florida "mostly sunshine."

ELIMINATION TOURNAMENT Naval Air Facility Atsugi Japan

Men's Results: 1st, Mitchell Jordan SSGT

USAF; 2nd, John Pitts LCDR USN; 3rd, James Mulroy LT USN; 4th, John Dobbs PO2 USN; 5th, Roger Delorme LCPL USMC; 6th, Barry Lambert LCDR USN; 7th, Dave Waite PO3 USN; 8th, J.E. Doolittle CAPT USN; 9th, L.A. Washington CPO USN; 10th, H. L. Dean LT USN.
Women's Results: 1st, Penelope Elms PO2 USN; 2nd, Dora Allen PO3 USN.

MAINE OPEN RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP Mall Racquetball Club Portland, Me. Downeast Court Club Falmouth, Me.

Women's Results:

Open: E. Ehrlich over J. Adler.
Open Consolation: J. Flahive.
B: L. Haulenbeck over G. Rosenfeld.
B Consolation: Kadry.
C: S. Lowell over D. Christiansen.
Novice: D. Giroux over K. Gosselin.
Novice Consolation: J. Bryant.
Doubles: M. Callahan & C. Callahan over J. Adler & M. Chase Wells.

Men's Results:

Open: B. Christensen over M. Luciw.
Open Consolation: B. Pattison.
B: D. Wells over N. Bernier.
B Consolation: J. Yoh.
C: A. Hall over M. Masselli.
C Consolation: B. Cannan.
Novice: R. Tanguay over G. Tito.
Novice Consolation: S. Donovan.
Senior: R. Folsom over L. Fonseca.
Senior Consolation: B. LaFrancois.
Master's: F. Christensen over M. Friedman.
Master's Consolation: B. Carter.
Open Doubles: E. Castillo & T. Waltz over M. Luciw & S. Dubord.

JUNIORS:

Jr. Boys, 17 under: J. Wyse over P. Giguere.
Consolation: O. Westervelt.
Jr. Boys, 14 under: M. Ladge over D. Marden.
Consolation: E. Foley.
Jr. Girls, 14 under: L. Fitzpatrick over H. Spalding.
Consolation: B. Roy.

1ST ANNUAL RACQUETBALL SINGLES TOURNAMENT Northwest YMCA La Jolla, Calif.

Men's A:

Semifinals: Jim Anderson over Joey Gonzalez, 15-7, 15-9; Randy Dale over John Paul Vasquez, 15-13, 15-10.
Finals: Randy Dale over Jim Anderson, 6-15, 15-13, 15-12.

Men's C:

Semifinals: Frank Villa over Lee Stein, 15-7, 15-8; Ed Quinten over Jon Guyett, 10-15, 15-2, 15-8.
Finals: Ed Quinten over Frank Villa, 15-5, 15-11.

Men's Novice:

Semifinals: Joe Cabrera over Todd Singkin, 15-1, 15-8; R. Lewis over Melvin Wolchinsky, 11-15, 15-10, 15-5.
Finals: R. Lewis over Joe Cabrera, 15-5, 15-12.

Women's Novice:

Semifinals: Janis Gorham over Robin Diener, 15-1, 15-6; Marie Rodriguez over Vicki Tarleton, 15-13, 5-15, 15-13.
Finals: Janis Gorham over Marie Rodriguez, 15-1, 15-6.

Continued on page 46

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Continued from page 43

WEST VIRGINIA STATE RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT The Coliseum Morgantown, West Virginia

Men's Open:

Quarterfinals: Rich Yobbagy over Tom Lovins (15-6, 3-15, 15-6); Jay Besson over Paul Hewett (15-4, 16-18, 15-2); Dave Allie over Kevin Becker (15-2, 8-15, 15-6); Dave Taylor over Bruce Tinker (15-10, 15-5).

Semifinals: Rich Yobbagy over Jay Besson (15-6, 15-4); Dave Taylor over Dave Allie (15-8, 15-11).

Finals: Rich Yobbagy over Dave Taylor (15-9, 15-10).

Third Place: Jay Besson over Dave Allie (15-6, 15-0).

Consolation Final: Casey Brown over Jack Boyles (15-10, 15-6).

Men's "B":

Quarterfinals: Mike Phillips over Alex Wilson (15-6, 13-15, 15-9); Virgil Smaltz over Philip Hall (15-7, 15-7); Paul Foose over Michael Tarbuck (15-9, 15-7); Jack Boyles over Joe Prentiss (15-0, 15-3).

Semifinals: Mike Phillips over Virgil Smaltz (15-8, 15-12); Jack Boyles over Paul Foose (15-9, 15-7).

Finals: Jack Boyles over Mike Phillips (15-9, 15-13).

Third Place: Virgil Smaltz over Paul Foose (15-4, 16-14).

Consolation Final: Paul O'Neill over Okey Groves (15-5, 15-11).

SENIORS:

Quarterfinals: Chuck North over Maurice Presseau (15-2, 15-4); Tom Haden over Joe Prentiss (15-11, 12-15, 15-12); A. W. Sue over Dan Riegner (15-4, 15-4); Tom Staley over Marlin Hall (15-1, 15-4).

Semifinals: Chuck North over Tom Haden (15-0, 15-13); A. W. Sue over Tom Staley (9-15, 15-10, 16-14).

Finals: Chuck North over A. W. Sue (15-6, 15-5).

Consolation Final: Frank White over Michael Perring. (15-4, 15-7).

NOVICE:

Quarterfinals: Richard Worley over Bob McNeil (15-4, 5-15, 15-11); William Manley over William Barnes (15-10, 15-3); Barry Meneghelli over Robert Jafrate (15-10, 8-15, 15-13); Alan Frankel over William Ruble (default).

Semifinals: William Manley over Richard Worley (15-3, 15-6); Barry Meneghelli over Alan Frankel (15-11, 15-7).

Finals: William Manley over Barry Meneghelli (15-11, 16-14).

Third Place: Richard Worley over Alan Frankel (15-8, 7-15, 15-11).

Consolation Final: Joe Olivito over Scott Mitchell (15-11, 15-12).

DOUBLES:

Quarterfinals: Besson & Allie over Foose & Barnes (15-1, 15-4); Lovins & Sprotzer over Lewis & Tinker (15-9, 15-9); Block & Brown over Lowe & Dixon (15-2, 15-10); Wilson & Becker over Sharadin & Hall (15-7, 15-8).

Semifinals: Besson & Allie over Lovins & Sprotzer (6-15, 15-9, 15-9); Wilson & Becker over Block & Brown (15-10, 15-3).

Finals: Besson & Allie over Wilson & Becker (12-15, 15-9, 15-4).

WOMEN'S "B":

Quarterfinals: Carolyn Nelson over Pam Francis (forfeit); Karen Baker over Janice Billeci (15-10, 15-8); Kris King over Lori Mousetis (15-1, 15-1); Jill Wiggins over Jill Nau (15-12, 16-14).

Semifinals: Carolyn Nelson over Karen

Baker (15-4, 15-4); Jill Wiggins over Kris King (15-2, 15-8).
 Finals: Jill Wiggins over Carolyn Nelson (15-7, 15-8).
 Consolation Final: Jill Nau over Janice Billeci (15-5, 11-15, 15-8).

**AMF VOIT/MARVEN GARDEN
 RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT**
 Essex Racquet Club
 West Orange, N. J.

Men's 35 & Over:

Quarterfinals: Letter over Silver, 21-11, 21-9;
 Nariewicz over Peck by forfeit; Theriault over Fine, 21-12, 21-17; Kohout over Christman 9-21, 21-12, 11-4.

Semifinals: Letter over Theriault 21-7, 21-20;
 Kohout over Nariewicz 21-5, 21-7.

Finals: Letter over Kohout 21-10, 21-15.

Men's A:

Quarterfinals: Letter over Sweetwood 19-21, 21-10, 11-7; Ryle over Kohout 21-15, 21-8;
 Mikxza over Rawding 21-5, 5-21, 11-4;
 Bierman over Peck by forfeit.

Semifinals: Letter over Ryle, 21-18, 21-15;
 Bierman over Mikxza, 21-5, 21-15.

Finals: Letter over Bierman, 21-13, 21-15.

Men's B:

Quarterfinals: Berwick over Santangelo, 21-9, 21-4; Gladstone over Greenberg, 21-8, 21-5;
 Goodman over Sherman, 17-21, 21-8, 11-3;
 Mikxza over Zosche, 21-11, 21-19.

Semifinals: Berwick over Gladstone, 10-21, 21-4, 11-9; Mikxza over Goodman, 21-12, 20-21, 11-3.

Finals: Berwick over Mikxza, 21-19, 21-7.

Men's C:

Quarterfinals: Welaj over Kunigonis, 21-3, 21-5; Taylor over Santungelo, 21-13, 21-4;
 Whitins over Bednarski, 21-2, 21-7;
 Welshans over Demner, 21-12, 21-2.

Semifinals: Welaj over Taylor, 21-13, 21-4;
 Welshans over Whitins, 21-20, 21-15.

Finals: Welaj over Welshans, 21-19, 12-21, 11-8.

Women's A/B:

Quarterfinals: Rudysz over Taylor, default;
 Polumbo over Feninello, 21-8, 21-2;
 Strandskow over Peckerman, 21-5, 21-4;
 Hurwitz over Moskovitz, 21-4, 21-11.

Semifinals: Polumbo over Rudysz, default;
 Hurwitz over Strandskow, 21-4, 21-11.

Finals: Hurwitz over Polumbo, 21-15, 21-10.

Women's C:

Quarterfinals: Williams over Demner, 21-7, 21-11; Shiroky over Tolan, 21-7, 21-14;
 Gambuto over Feldman, 21-14, 21-12; Elia over Goldstein by forfeit.

Semifinals: Williams over Shiroky, 21-16, 21-11;
 Gambuto over Elia, 21-20, 21-16.

Finals: Williams over Gambuto, 21-9, 21-8.

**IRA NORTHWEST REGIONAL
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Men's Open Singles:

Quarterfinals: D. Retter over B. Cooper, 21-2, 21-10; S. Bulmer over G. Retter 16-21, 21-7, 11-8;
 J. Larson over J. Boyce 21-6, 21-9; D. Carley over M. Hoonen 21-15, 11-21, 11-10.

Semifinals: D. Retter over S. Bulmer 21-4, 21-9;
 J. Larson over D. Carley 21-11, 21-13.

Finals: D. Retter over J. Larson 21-13, 21-13.

Men's Senior Singles:

Quarterfinals: Tom Ballantyne over Bruno DeRosa 21-6, 21-6; Gary Nygaard over Bob Stoyko 21-20, 2-21, 11-1;
 Jerry Skogstad over Ed Henry 21-4, 21-12; Ernie Lenart over Rich Maxey 21-13, 21-8.

Semifinals: Tom Ballantyne over Gary Nygaard 16-21, 21-16, 11-6; Jerry Skogstad

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over Ernie Lenart 21-15, 21-8.
Finals: Tom Ballantyne over Jerry Skogstad 21-12, 21-14.

Men's Master Singles:
Quarterfinals: P. Whitehill over A. Henshaw 21-5, 21-8; G. Sherman over R. Kelley 7-21, 21-14, 11-5; C. Jackson over M. Anderson 21-8, 21-6; J. Luckman over O. Maloy 21-9, 21-16.
Semifinals: P. Whitehill over G. Sherman 21-9, 21-10; C. Jackson over J. Luckman 21-10, 21-8.
Finals: P. Whitehill over C. Jackson 20-21, 21-3, 11-10.

Men's Golden Masters:
Quarterfinals: Don Goddard over Harrold Libak 21-8, 21-10; Jerry Lamb over Butch Zak; John Leshner over Rollin Field 21-7, 21-6; Ed Lohr over Phil Edge 21-13, 21-9.
Semifinals: Don Goddard over Jerry Lamb 21-15, 21-3; John Leshner over Ed Lohr 21-8, 21-15.
Finals: Don Goddard over John Leshner 21-7, 21-9.

Men's Open Doubles:
Quarterfinals: Retter/Larson over Rasmussen/Martin; Retter/Stredwick over Cooper/Therrin; Jackson/Skogstad over Smith/Davis; Carley/Wold over Carr/Medvec.
Semifinals: Retter/Larson over Retter/Stredwick 21-16, 21-17; Jackson/Skogstad over Carley/Wold 17-21, 21-17, 11-2.
Finals: Retter/Larson over Jackson/Skogstad 21-16, 21-17.

Men's "B" Singles:
Quarterfinals: R. Rios over K. Galloway 21-10, 21-12; A. Clausen over R. Medvec 21-7, 20-21, 11-2; G. Smith over M. Martin 21-20, 20-21, 11-7; K. Rasmussen over B. Von Wormer 21-5, 21-17.
Semifinals: R. Rios over A. Clausen 21-19, 21-13; K. Rasmussen over G. Smith 21-5, 21-17.
Finals: K. Rasmussen over R. Rios 21-9, 21-6.

Men's "C" Singles:
Quarterfinals: L. Hammock over M. Ellenger 21-18, 10-21, 11-6; F. Romano over G. Kanzler 21-5, 21-8; P. Charbonneau over K. Killinger, forfeit; M. Davis over J. Manlowe.
Semifinals: F. Romano over L. Hammock. 21-8, 21-2; P. Charbonneau over M. Davis 21-16, 11-21, 11-4.
Finals: F. Romano over P. Charbonneau 21-4, 21-13.

Round Robin Finalists:
Jr. 10 yr. olds: 1st, Derick Robinson 14-21, 21-20, 11-10; 2nd, Georgie Grijalva; 3rd, Kirk Lenart 21-3, 21-6; 4th, Brennen Guth.
Jr. 13 yr. olds: 1st, Darrin Eyring 21-5, 21-6; 2nd, Ryan Franklin; 3rd, Reagan Franklin 21-10, 21-12; 4th, John Freedman.
Jr. 15 yr. olds: 1st, Brad Poppino 21-18, 21-9; 2nd, Mike Freeman; 3rd, Satu Limaye 21-12, 21-3; 4th, Mark Henshaw.
Jr. 17 yr. olds: 1st, Mark Martin 9-21, 21-11, 11-7; 2nd, Greg Boland; 3rd, Mike George 18-21, 21-11, 11-8; 4th, Brad Poppino.

Women's Novice Singles: 1st, Lori Campbell 21-17, 21-16; 2nd, Peggy Nathans; 3rd, Candice Louise 8-21, 21-6; 4th, Patty Melguin.

Senior Doubles: 1st, Poage/Ferrel; 2nd, Goddard/Luckman.

Senior Women Singles: 1st, Judy Pike 21-15, 21-19; 2nd, Barbara Smith; 3rd, Pat Guth; 4th, Betty Field.

Women's Open Singles: 1st, Donna Egnew 21-14, 21-16; 2nd, Jeanette Crnich; 3rd, Nancy Pellegrini, forfeit; 4th, Jamie Abbott.

Women's "B" Singles: 1st, Momi Lee 21-8, 21-13; 2nd, Pat Guth; 3rd, Barbara Seff; 4th, Tami Tibbitts. ■



International Racquetball Association
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