

RACQUETBALL

RACQUETBALL

ILLUSTRAT

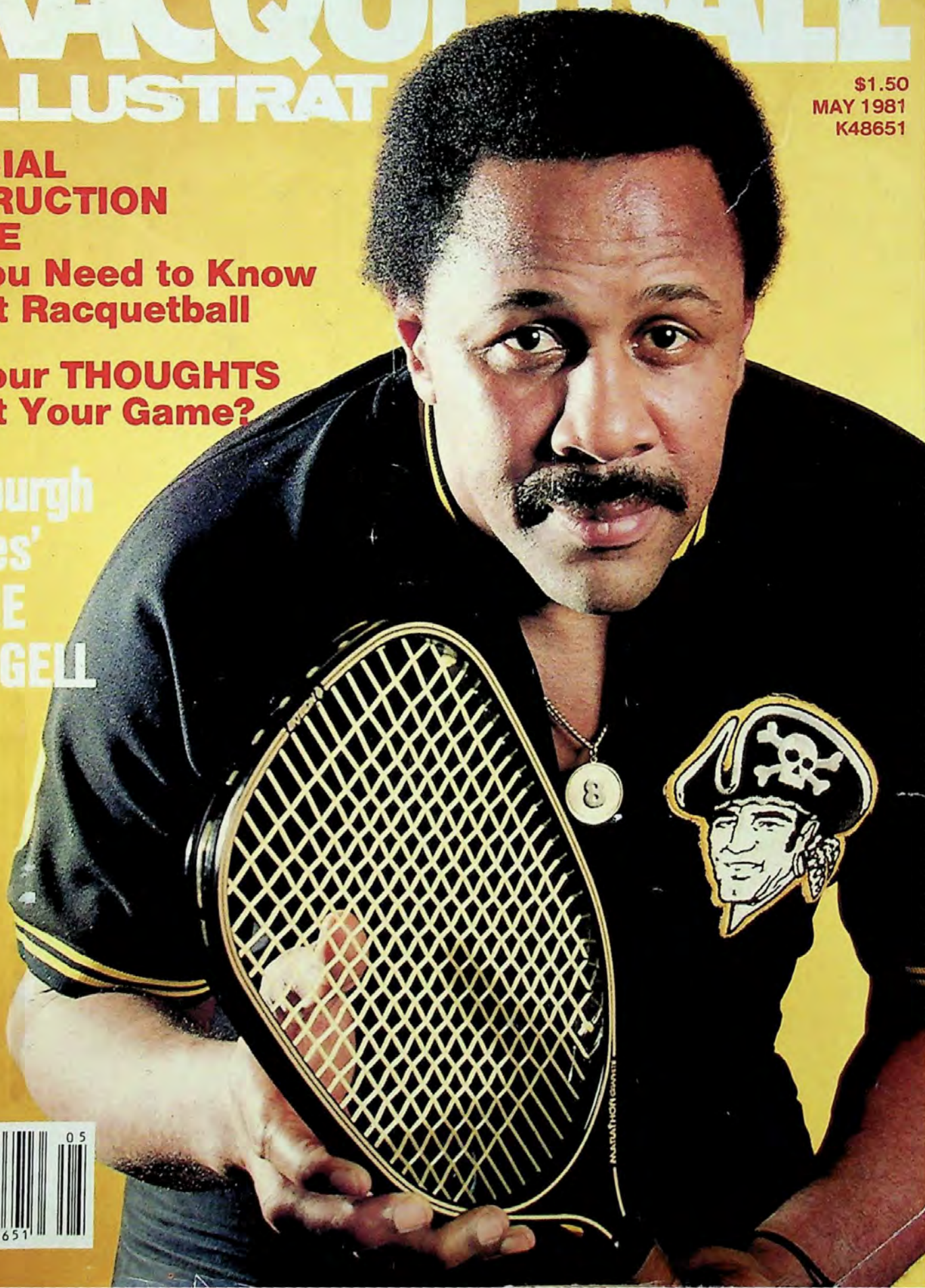
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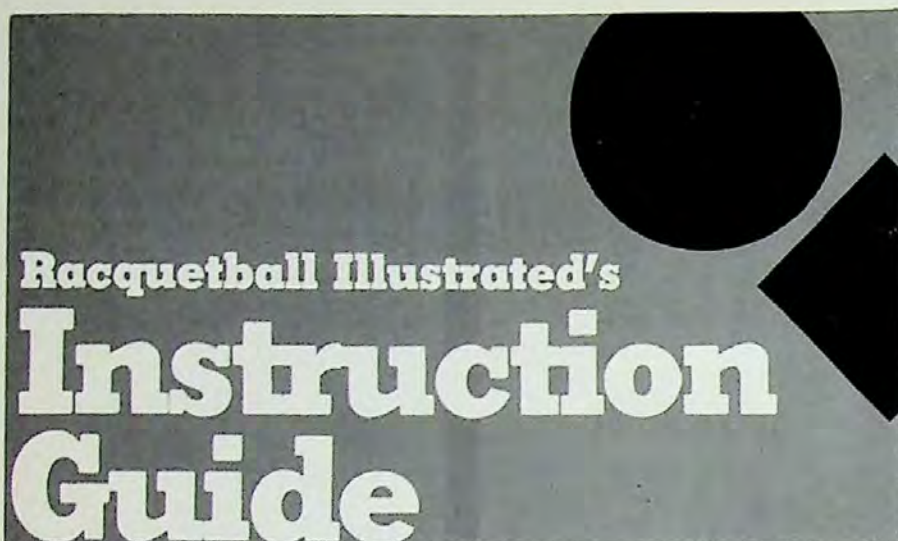
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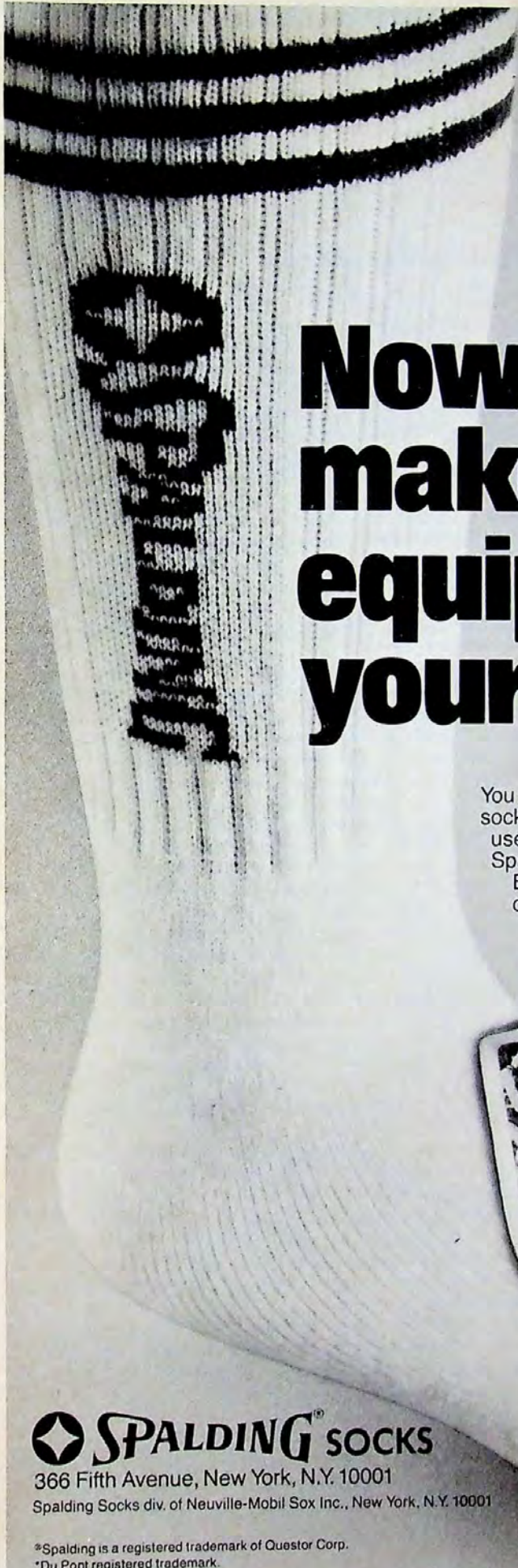
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UP FRONT



Back To The Basics

Every so often letter writers ask us to include more instruction in the magazine. These are usually the hardcore racquetball players who are only concerned about improving their game, much to the chagrin of writers and editors who put forth their best editorial talents in hopes of getting read.

Racquetball Illustrated has always been geared toward the consumer, the man-on-the-street, and this type of person is undefinable. He or she is a person of all playing abilities, of all ages and with all types of interests. Therefore, we direct our editorial coverage to all types of people. That means we don't over-emphasize instruction or tournament coverage or any other one thing. We offer a balanced diet.

But every so often we like to please that person who reads us only for instruction, and this month we once again present our "Instruction Guide."

The last time we offered a guide of this type was in January, 1980. Now, some 16 months later, it is time once again to give you an overdose of instruction.

What we have here is a 10-part series that takes the player back to the basics. There are stories on the forehand, backhand, serving, service returns and positioning, court coverage, ceiling shots, corner shots, strategy, passing shots and conditioning.

Most of the authors are touring pros or players who have published instructional books. Seven of the 10 stories are original, written exclusively for this issue. Two of the stories—backhand and serving—are excerpts from published books, and one of the articles—forehand—is reprinted from our January, 1980 instruction guide because we felt it told the story better than any new piece could have.

We have purposely gone back to the basics because most of the players out there are novices and intermediates who need to take a step back once in a while to get their game together. The same could even be said for advanced players. We have also offered basic instruction here because players can read the more advanced instruction in our regular monthly issues.

We figure by the time you finish reading this issue and mastering all the strokes, it will be a year or so down the road and time for another instruction issue. That one will probably be geared to advanced players.

If instruction is not your interest, we have also managed to filter in some excellent features. One article is on touring pro Rich Wagner, who has overcome alcoholism and other personal problems to regain his high ranking on the pro tour. We also have a cute feature on the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team, many of whom spend their off-season time playing racquetball. And there is an interesting psychological article on how thoughts can affect your game.

We also direct your attention to our travel bag section, a replacement for fashion this month. With summer travel plans coming up, we wanted to give you a consumer's selection of the designs available.

Ben Kalb

Ben Kalb

Cartoon by Tony Saltzman



"I don't think you got stuck with a lousy partner. Look how he's braced to ooze toward either side of the court."

Foot Problems

After reading your March, 1981 issue, I find it necessary to forward the following comments concerning your "Rx For Winning" section with Ralph L. Gorrell, M.D. Since I am a podiatrist, I am concerned with the "answers" given questions concerning the feet.

For example, in the second answer, your medical "specialist" suggests that any sudden pain in the big toe, foot or ankle may be due to gout. Though this is a possibility, it is a very unlikely one. Anyone who has ever been diagnosed as having this abnormality usually knows the symptoms. Most cases of acute gouty arthritis do not first cause pain during active hours. Usually the pain develops at night, and, true, the pain can become quite severe quickly. A trip to the emergency room might help but a true diagnosis of this condition, by lab confirmation, probably could not be made for seven to 10 days after the onset. Obviously, there are countless other causes for "sudden pain" in the toes, feet or ankles as any non-medical reader might conclude. I would surely hate to see all of my racquetball friends running to the hospital with thoughts of gout because of "sudden pain."

After several years of treating hundreds of athletes as well as professional and non-pro racquetball players, I take to question the statement, "Normally, there is no need for artificial foot devices such as arch supports." True in a "normal foot" under normal circumstances, foot orthotics are probably not needed. But there are not too many "normal" feet out there and the stress of racquetball on the feet is obviously not a normal activity. If jogging causes three to four times the body weight to be stressed into the foot, then it is quite conceivable that racquetball could cause the same or more stress. These forces often cause an overuse syndrome of symptoms, even in the "normal" foot. I am not too sure that "your arches will remain strong if you keep the muscles of the lower leg in good condition," etc. Most pathological conditions of the feet and legs that require foot orthotics are NOT usually due to a weak arch anyway.

Dr. Stephen Follickman
Parkersburg, W. Va.

Place Your Bets

Please settle a bet. I say that racquetball is the fastest-growing sport in America today. My friend says that soccer is the fastest-growing sport in the country. Perhaps you could shed some light on the subject. Which sport has the most active participants? If you can be of any assistance in this matter I would really appreciate the help.

David Bonner
Madison, Wisc.

Editor's note: You win, at least if you want to take the word of the A.C. Nielson Company. In

a study done from 1976-1979, racquetball was the fastest-growing participant sport in the nation, having made a jump of 283 percent. Racquetball, according to the Nielson study, was played by 10,654,000 people. That put the sport at 21st in ranking. Soccer was said to have 6,530,000 players, or a ranking of 25th. No tests have been reported for 1980 yet.

Portable Court

In response to your article, "The Million Dollar Court," which appeared in the December issue of your magazine, we wish to clarify the status of negotiations on the four-wall all glass racquetball court.

At the time of publication you stated that negotiations were being carried out with various interested parties including Stan Irwin Enterprises of California, and that certain "rights" to the court had been granted. For the record, all negotiations have been terminated by Twin-Vue Glass, Inc., and although negotiations proceed on various fixed wall Twin-Vue projects, ownership of the Portable Court is completely unencumbered.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the Portable Court and its probable positive effects with any interested parties.

Ronald J. Haber, President
W & W Products International, Inc.
Spring Valley, N.Y.

Celebrity Covers

I have noticed off and on your readers' distaste for your celebrity covers. I, for one, would like to put in a positive word for your cover subjects.

Each month I await your magazine to my mail box, and one of the things I look forward to is your cover subject. It's kind of like a surprise for me. Who will *Racquetball Illustrated* get this month? Will it be someone I like (i.e., Barbi Benton) or someone I don't care much for (i.e., Andy Kaufman). Whatever, it is a little, bright addition for me that I don't find in most other magazines.

Tad Bolton
Minneapolis, Minn.

March Issue

May I congratulate you on your fine March issue. Usually I read selected articles from your magazines, but this issue I read cover to cover.

I especially enjoyed the articles on racquetball in the prison systems, racquetball in Houston, the feature on Judy Thompson and the article on the trouble within the ranks of the USRA.

You do a professional job.

Barbara Harrison
Hartford, Conn.

Player Of The Year

Your voters totally missed the boat on your most-improved player award and it's partially because you failed to nominate the player

who truly was most improved and partly because the fans that voted didn't realize just how well she's done. I'm talking about Bonnie Stoll, who went from nowhere to No. 5 on the WPRA tour.

And how Hogan and Peck could have possibly beat out Yellen for Player of the Year is beyond me. Yellen goes out and beats Hogan twice and takes over the number-one spot held by Hogan for four years and plays some of the greatest, most consistent racquetball ever seen and doesn't win. What does a guy have to do?

I agree with not allowing the players to pick the winners, but you sure could use a panel of experts because your fans really missed the boat in my opinion.

Ralph Moil
Posen, Ill.

State of the Sport

On behalf of Laventhol & Horwath, I would like to express my gratitude for including my comments in your article on the state of the sport of the racquetball industry which appeared in the January issue of *Racquetball Illustrated*.

I found the article most interesting and well written. It is good to know that your publication will keep us informed of where racquetball is today and where it may be going in the immediate future. Articles such as that are a benefit to all of us, and I hope you will continue to do them in the future.

Eric P. Evans
Houston, Tex.

A Lefty

In reference to the recent article (January, 1981), on "How To Play A Lefty," by Craig McCoy with Carol George, the author refers to Jimmy Connors as a right-hander. If I'm not mistaken, Connors is one of the world's great left-handed players.

Chris Giardina
Sandusky, Ohio

Editor's note: You are not mistaken. It seems pro racquetball players and writers don't follow tennis much and for that matter our copy editing department didn't catch it either.

Three-Wall

I noticed your "Players" photo of Brian Stokes Mitchell (March, 1981) from *Trapper John, M.D.*, and how he says he likes to play racquetball on a three-wall court.

I wish you would write more about three-wall courts and about how one could play better on them.

Paul Valverde
Phoenix, Ariz.

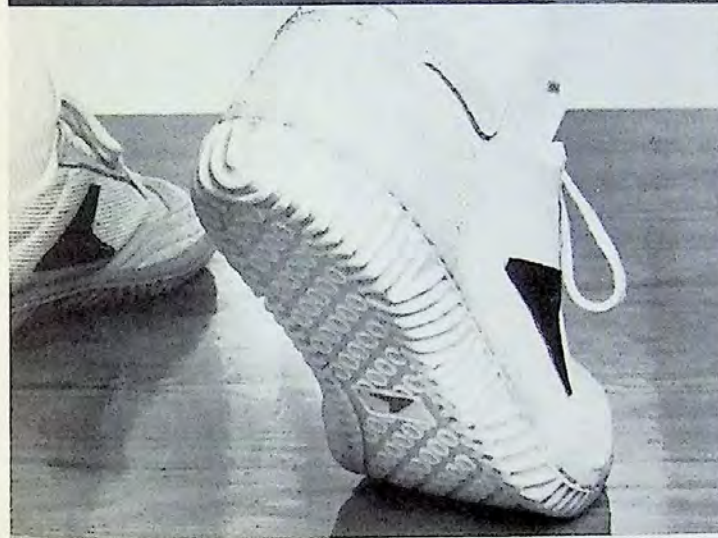
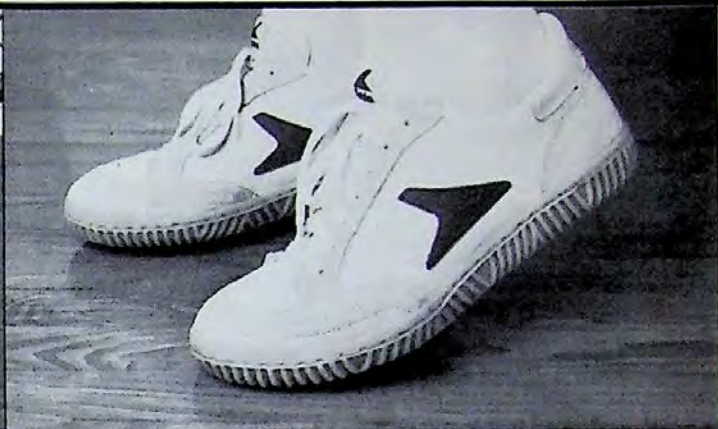
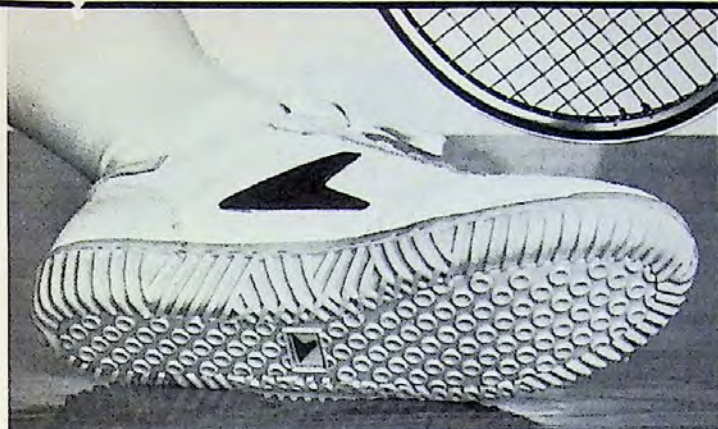
Editor's note: We had an instruction article on outdoor play in our February, 1980 issue, and we plan on having another one later this year.

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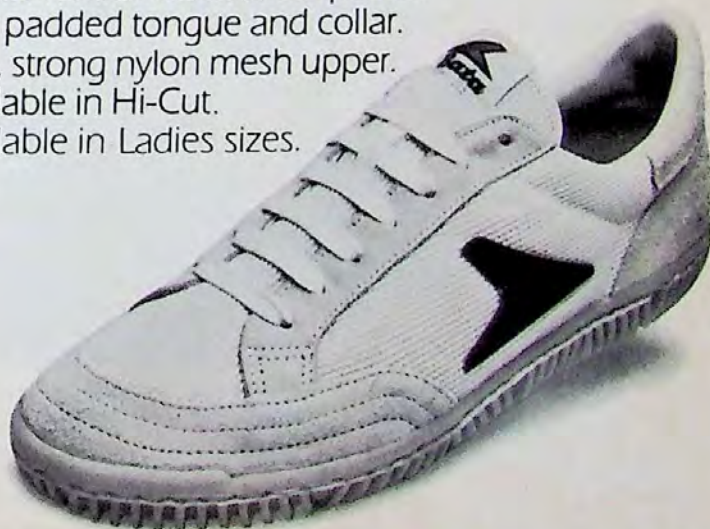
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Racquetball Illustrated's Player of the Year Party



Marty Hogan receives male Player of the Year trophy from actress-singer Barbi Benton.

Photos by David M. King



Heather McKay received her female Player of the Year honor from Los Angeles Dodger third baseman Ron Cey. Each of the three winners also received a stereo system.



Former high jump world record holder Dwight Stones presented Lynn Adams with the trophy for the most improved Player of the Year.

Over 250 people turned out to *Racquetball Illustrated's* second annual Player of the Year cocktail party on the S.S. Princess Louise floating restaurant in San Pedro, Calif.

Honored at the party were Marty Hogan, male player of the year; Heather McKay, female player of the year; and Lynn Adams, most improved player of the year.

Each of the three winners received a trophy in the shape of a "number one" and a stereo system, featuring Rogers Sound Lab (RSL) speakers, valued at \$1,000.

Hogan was presented his award by actress-singer Barbi Benton. McKay was given her honor by Los Angeles Dodger third baseman Ron Cey. Adams was given her trophy by former high jump world record holder Dwight Stones.

Other celebrities in attendance included Brian Stokes Mitchell of *Trapper John, M.D.*, Tim Culbertson of *Hill Street Blues*, and former Mr. America bodybuilding champion Ray Mentzer.

The party was co-sponsored by Kori of California, John Newcombe Activewear, New Balance shoes, United Sportswear and Dynacam health equipment.

Kori of California, John Newcombe Activewear and New Balance put on a fashion show. United Sportsclubs, a network for the traveling racquetball player, gave out memberships to all guests in attendance. Dynacam gave away a door prize of a set of 5-pound dumbbells in a customized case and sponsored a bodybuilding exhibition by the current Ms. Olympia, Rachel McLish.



Tim Culbertson (*Hill Street Blues*) and Melody Plinyon model clothes from John Newcombe Activewear.

Vicki Hill and Bill Bumiller show off outfits from Kori of California.

Player of the Year Party



(Above) Also in attendance at the awards party were touring pros Don Thomas (left) and Jerry Hilecher.

(Above right) Part of the entertainment included an exhibition by women's body-building champion Rachel McLish.

(Right) Joining Ron Cey (right) at his table was actor Brian Mitchell, who plays in *Trapper John, M.D.*





Racquetball Illustrated's Instruction Guide

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by Jay Jones

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with Steve Keeley

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Conditioning
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Gregg Peck

Instruction Guide

Forehand

By Jay Jones

Editor's note: This is reprinted from *Racquetball Illustrated's* "Instruction Guide," January, 1980.

Most everybody has, during their younger days, skipped a flat rock across a lake or pond. Although racquetball was probably furthest from your mind at that point, whether you knew it or not, you had just taken your first lesson in racquetball—the basic forehand stroke.

The forehand stroke is very much like skipping a rock across a lake. To begin with, all your weight is on the back foot. But as you

start forward, your weight is shifted to the front foot via the knees.

There are three things to remember as you are starting forward. First of all, you should drop your right shoulder. Second, you should point your elbow at the ball coming towards you and, third, point the butt of the racquet.

By pointing the butt of the racquet, you are assured that your wrist is cocked. If you are not pointing the butt of your racquet, your wrist cannot be cocked.

Then, by attempting to point your elbow at the ball, it automatically makes you drop your shoulder. The three kind of work together. If you remember one, you will pretty much automatically do the other two.

As far as your body movement is concerned, you should think of yourself as a pup-

pet on a string. Your right arm and left leg are moving simultaneously.

One of the most important things to remember is to put your weight into the ball. You make contact with the ball about 1 ½ to 2 feet straight out from the heel of your lead foot. This is where timing comes in. Timing is that moment at which the straightening of the arm and the snap of the wrist come at the exact time the weight is on the forward foot.

The follow-through is also important. At the moment of contact (arm straightens and wrist snaps) your hips should be starting to pivot. If the follow-through is done correctly, your racquet should come up and hit you right on the point of your shoulder. And upon completion of the follow-through, if done correctly, your hips will have pivoted and the

Hitting a forehand, says Jay Jones, is like skipping a rock across a pond, or throwing a baseball sidearm. One can practice the movements without a racquet, then with a racquet. Note how the elbow leads, the butt of the racquet is facing the front wall, the knee is bent and the body weight is leaning into the ball. Jones has a theory that one should vision a "box" in preparing to hit the shot.



back foot will be dragging on the top of the toe. If you are dragging the side of the toe, you are not pivoting far enough, and consequently, you are not following through correctly.

To practice the proper stroke, place some tape on the floor in the shape of a rectangle or find a box with similar dimensions—about four feet long by about two feet wide and about a foot high.

Take note of the box corners. They serve a purpose in relation to you and the ball.

The outside front corner should, in effect, be the spot where the ball will be hit. The inside lead corner is the spot where your lead foot should be. Remember, it should be at the heel part of your lead foot.

The rear inside corner is where your right foot will be. This is where you plant yourself at the outset of the stroke. The outside rear corner is where the racquet will pass on the way to hitting the ball but the stroke should start higher, of course. Your racquet is basically a

continuous sliding stroke across the top of the imaginary box, making contact at the outside front corner.

The forehand is the most used stroke in the game but you don't just add racquet to ball and come up with perfection. There are several parts to a proper stroke—feet, knees, weight shift, rotation of the hips, cocked wrist, elbow, racquet butt, etc.—and each plays an equally important role in executing the best possible stroke. Too many people take it for granted.

The box concept is one way of making sure these things are done properly. It doesn't matter where you are going to hit the ball or from which direction you are coming from, the imaginary box is always there.

On contact, the ball is always on that lead outside corner. Your lead foot is always on the inside front corner. The rear foot is on the inside back corner and the racquet is coming through from the outside rear corner.

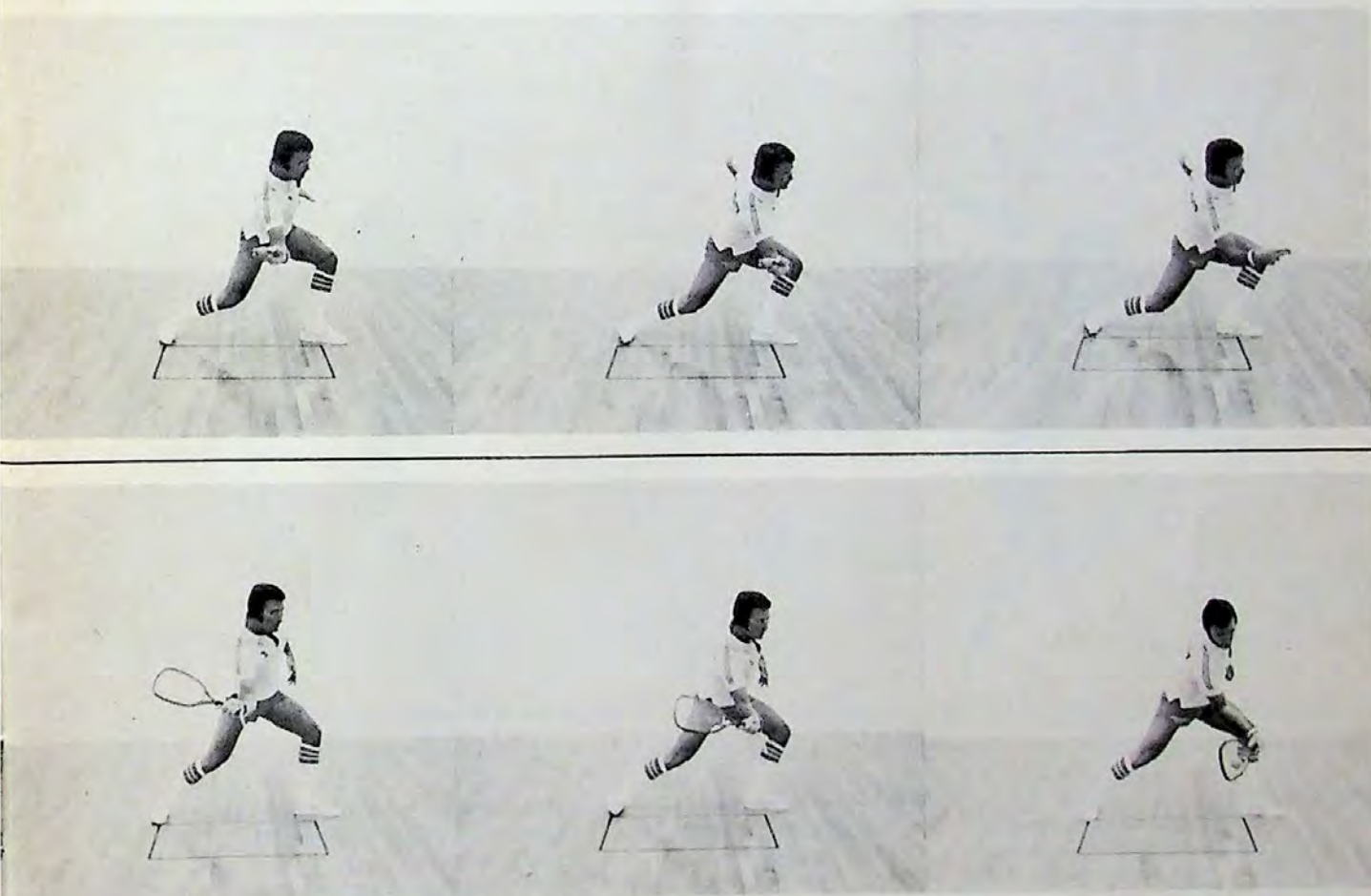
One of the most common errors is the player's approach to the ball. It doesn't matter from which direction you approach the ball. You always end up with your right foot (for a right-handed player) coming in and then planting that inside rear corner. The rear foot is what gives you proper balance for the rest of the stroke.

Ideally, you want to contact the ball with a flat racquet head.

What we have just talked about is the regular forehand—the one you use if you have a set-up; the one you use when you have plenty of time to plant and step into the shot.

But there is another forehand, one which the pros are forced to use more and more because the speed of the game has increased.

This forehand is used when the ball is shooting back in your direction and you don't



Instruction Guide

Forehand



1



2



3



4

The so-called power swing comes from a lack of time to set up for the shot. Jones recommends an underhand whipping motion.

have time to set up and make things nice and picture perfect. On this forehand, the racquet comes from forehead height—as if you were saluting over your right eye. Your wrist is not cocked at the start but becomes cocked as you whip around. The swing is an underhanded whipping motion.

On this forehand, you are shooting the ball

with an open stance. Your weight is shifted to the back and you are basically blasting away.

You are not looking for precision on this shot. You are looking for speed. You are not going for kill shots. You are going for down-the-line passing shots, about knee high.

Study the photos on these pages. Note the differences between the quick-thinking fore-

hand shot and the set-up shot.

If you are having problems with your forehand technique, drop the racquet for a few minutes and throw the ball in the proper motion. Or take an afternoon off and head down to the lake. Some of the best forehand shot artists in the country were once great rock skippers.

R

Backhand

By Shannon Wright
with Steve Keeley

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The major nemesis of many players on the court is not their opponent but their own backhand. Does this describe you? If so, it's probably because you haven't had many occasions during your life to use a motion even remotely resembling the backhand swing. You don't hammer a nail, chop wood, throw baseballs, swat flies, or even slap faces with your backhand. Life really is prejudiced against the racquetball backhand stroke. It's no wonder your backhand is weaker than your forehand.

No doubt, you have heard that the backhand is a potentially stronger stroke than the forehand. I concur, at least from the standpoint of power. The curious anatomical arrangement of the human body puts the hitting arm on the rear shoulder (nearer the back wall) when you hit a forehand. On the other hand, it's on the lead shoulder (nearer the front wall) when you hit a backhand. Think about the ramifications of this. It means that forehands require more of a push across the body, but backhands require a sort of pull across the body.

If you dig this theoretical stuff but my explanation is still a little hazy, consider the analogy of the right-handed baseball batter. Both hands are on the bat when he swings at a ball. His right hand basically pushes the bat and his left hand pulls the bat across his body. When the baseballer hits a home run, his right hand swings a forehand and his left hand swings a backhand—simultaneously. The important point in this analogy is that the backhand pull contributes *more* than the forehand push to generate stroke power for that home run.

Similarly, the backhand is the more powerful stroke in racquetball. But, you have to pull the hitting implement properly across your body to crack a home run or a backhand kill shot. The backhand model stroke I'm about to describe gives the stroke that is universally correct for the average player. You should use the model stroke as the basis for learning the backhand, but don't be afraid to make slight modifications to fit your personal physique and game style.

The backhand stroke and its add-ons are very similar to the forehand stroke and its

add-ons. Therefore, if you followed and practiced the forehand add-on explanation, the backhand add-on game should be fast, fun, and easy. Remember that the add-on concept starts with the most basic movement or link and adds another movement-link and another, until the movements link up to form a chain that is called your backhand stroke.

1. Grip your racquet with the proper backhand grip.

2. Stand on the court as you did for the forehand, except face the left sidewall on the short line—about an arm-and-a-racquet's length from that sidewall. Your feet should be comfortably apart, parallel and pointing at the left sidewall.

3. Close your backhand stance by sliding your right foot about two feet toward the left sidewall. Vary this closing distance a few inches more or less, depending on your height and build. Practice stepping into the closed stance about 20 times.

4. Extend your arm in front of the belt buckle of your gym shorts so that the racquet points at the sidewall. Cock your wrist for the backhand. Here is the first major deviation from the forehand add-on, so let's take a closer look at the backhand wrist cock.

5. If you have combined add-ons one through four, you are now in a closed stance with your arm straight out toward the left wall and with your wrist flexed back and up, holding the racquet in the backhand cocked position. Don't change anything in this step, except for a simple add-on. Take your racquet back one foot for a very short backswing. This backswing should be flat and level. Got it? Careful, maintain the wrist cock and don't start the backswing more than a foot back. No forward swing yet; just take the racquet back. Repeat about 20 times.

6. Let's now add the familiar wrist flick, without a ball. This two-foot flick-swing (one foot of backswing and one foot of follow-through) must be about knee-high. Keep it level and parallel to the floor. What we have is an abbreviated stroke with a gentle (for now) wrist snap at midswing, or the point of imaginary ball contact.

7. This is the ball add-on. Bounce the ball on the floor, as you did on the forehand, at a spot about one foot behind (toward the back wall) and two feet out (toward the left sidewall) from your right lead foot. The ball should rebound from the floor and peak about knee-high. Catch it just after it starts to descend from its zenith. Repeat until your bounces and catches are consistent. Try this step at least 20 times.

8. Now combine steps six and seven. Drop

and hit the ball in the proper contact zone just after it peaks at knee height. Use only a one-foot backswing and a one-foot follow-through to wrist-flick the ball straight into the front wall. The proper contact zone for the backhand has three dimensions: (1) distance from body, (2) depth (farther forward or farther back toward the back wall), and (3) height.

Remember that for now there is no step or body rotation before the swing, and the short stroke is flat and parallel to the floor. Place an imaginary table under the path of your racquet and another above that path. These will flatten out your swing. Then put a brick wall a foot back from the point of ball contact, and another one a foot ahead of that point of contact. These will prevent you from exceeding the two-foot swing with your backswing or follow-through.

9. This step adds on two more horizontal feet of level stroke. You now get to take a two-foot backswing and a two-foot follow-through. In other words, the mental tables remain stationary, but the brick walls are demolished and reconstructed parallel and four feet apart. This greater leeway allows you a longer, more powerful swing and a better wrist snap at mid-point in the stroke. Repeat this step 20 or so times.

10. Now add even more stroke power with an additional one foot of backswing and one foot of follow-through. Hit and retrieve a shot with this level six-foot swing, catch the ball, then rehit and retrieve again, about 20 times.

11. Now is the time for maximum backswing and follow-through. The ready position for this step is the closed stance with your racquet cocked in your maximum backswing. Maximum is as deep as feels comfortable. Just remember that the swing is still knee-high and fairly level throughout the maximally comfortable follow-through.

Got it? Now drop and hit the ball, making contact as usual in the proper contact zone just below your knees. There goes the ball—straight and hard into the front wall. Here it comes back—straight and hard at you. Catch and do it again and again.

12. Here's where we make the backswing less awkward with a simple add-on. Start with the racquet drawn back into your maximum backswing position as in the previous step. The face of the racquet should lie in a plane approximately parallel to your shoulders. Now crook your elbow 90 degrees. As with the forehand elbow crook, the triceps-biceps portion of your upper arm should be about parallel with the floor, and your forearm should point up at the ceiling.

Instruction Guide

Backhand



To hit the perfect backhand, your body starts to coil toward the back wall as you draw your racquet back. Your wrist is cocked. Step into the stroke and contact the ball below the knees. In follow-through, your hips open to the front wall.



If you have problems with the backhand, Wright recommends using a box for a training aid. Note how the head of the racquet sweeps horizontally through the contact zone above the center of the box, and how the body rotation emphasizes an uncoiling movement.

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Understand that we have removed the upper imaginary table boundary for this and the ensuing steps, but the lower table remains to keep your stroke flat rather than underhanded. Drop the ball, swing, and hit as before. Repeat until you've done it enough times.

13. This step is just a step—into the ball. Up to now, you have not taken a stride into your swings, but instead have started out in the closed stance—as if you had already stepped into the shot. But now I want you to begin in an open stance, with feet parallel to each other and equidistant from the sidewall. (This is the same starting stance as for the first step in this series of backhand add-ons.) Ready? Without the ball, step from an open into a closed stance by bringing your right foot a couple of feet closer to the left sidewall. That's all; no swing. Repeat 20 times, or until the movement becomes subconscious.

14. Now you are going to step into, and swing at, an imaginary ball. Stride into a closed stance with your lead foot as in the previous step, then swing at air. Pretend that you are blasting the ball low and straight into the front wall. Stand back up to admire your shot. Do it again and again until you have put away a couple dozen imaginary kill shots.

15. Back to reality. This add-on adds the

ball to the previous step. Do it.

Keep in mind that this is a run-on of add-ons. It should be a smooth sequence of continuous motion, rather than a staccato connection of separate movements. If your stroke is jerky at first, don't fret. Each ensuing practice session will be like speeding up the individual frames of a motion picture, until they blend into a continuous show. Find out for yourself by practicing this step until you're satisfied.

16. This final step provides the last link in the chain that produces the model backhand stroke. Let's get some body rotation into your swing. Many greenhorn racquetballers resemble arthritic rock-and-roll dancers in that they fail to shake their hips. You have to use your hips in racquetball to get the weight transfer that engenders maximum stroke power. It's a coil-step-uncoil sequence.

Let's add body rotation to your backhand: Start with the same cocked backswing as in the preceding two steps, but now rotate your body a little toward the left rear court corner—just a little bit of body coil for now. Then drop the ball in preparation for the swing. Your body may have a tendency to turn even more toward the left rear corner just after the ball hits the floor. Let it, because this additional coil means more power. Just after the ball hits

the floor, step into the closed stance. This step initiates the uncoil of your pelvis and shoulders. Twist them around forcefully. The downswing begins just after the pelvis and shoulders start to uncoil. You should be able to feel a forward shift of body weight from rear to front foot—and from your body to your racquet to the ball.

The resulting rubber-on-string is a smashing meeting. High-speed photography reveals that a powerful stroke generates such rapid racquet head speed that during string contact—the time between initial ball contact and eventual ball release—some very interesting things occur. The ball flattens on the strings as if suddenly deflated; the strings give, or bend back like a sheet of thin rubber paper; the entire racquet frame flexes backward from the throat; and the sides of the frame simultaneously collapse slightly around the ball.

Isn't that scenario remarkably similar to your backhand rips? If not, practice step 16 some more.

R

Instruction Guide

The Serve

By Victor I. Spear, M.D.

Editor's note: This is reprinted from *Sports Illustrated Racquetball* by Victor I. Spear, M.D. Copyright 1979 by Time, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., New York.

To define the object of the serve is to redefine the basic winning strategy. Either serve an ace or be sure you don't give the other player a setup on the return. If you don't go for an ace, try to make his shot as difficult as possible, in order to increase your chances for a winner on the second shot.

The service ace plays a prominent part in the tennis offense. It plays no part in badminton. In racquetball, it falls somewhere in between. It has more of a role at the pro level and less among amateurs. The average player is not required to hit great serves—just to avoid hitting poor ones.

Variety is crucial. Never let your opponent get grooved on a serve that you repeat without variation. The variations are infinite. However, regardless of the total number of possible serves, all serves can be divided into three types:

The Drive Serve

The drive serve is hit with a basic forehand stroke, so you want to drop the ball ahead and to the right. Then take a full stride into the shot near the service line. Whether you go left or right, there are two major variations:

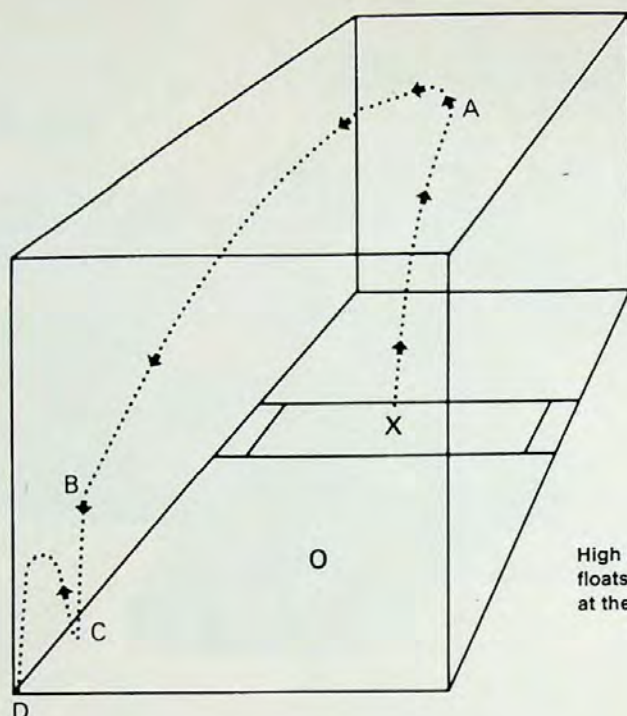
The Short-Corner Drive

"Short-corner drive" is a misnomer, of course. The target is the "corner" made by the short line and side wall. This serve is your best chance for an ace. Try to "crack it out" just barely over the short line. The trick lies in hitting it hard enough to make it over the short line, yet low enough to make it stay down after the bounce. The timing, power, and wrist snap must be perfect. Variation is provided by changes in the server's position.

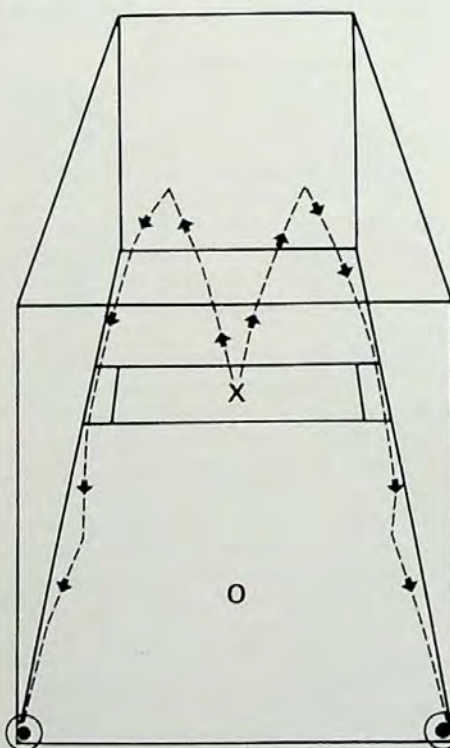
If you make an error on this one, you're better off to be short, so you'll have a chance to serve again. If you hit it too deep or too high, it will rebound off the side wall for a setup.

The Deep-Corner Drive

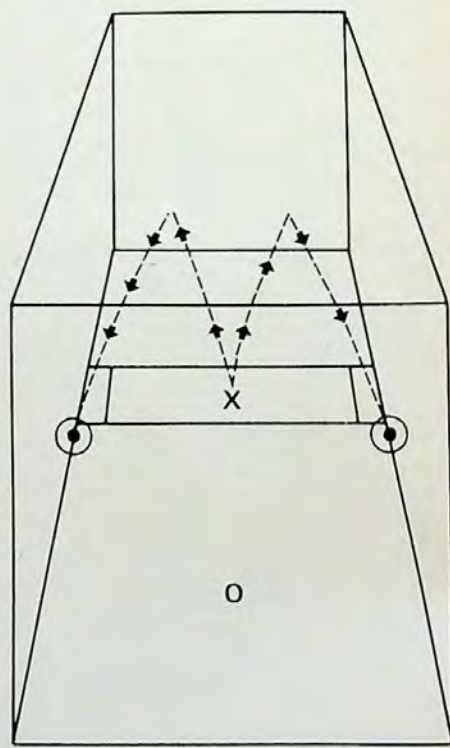
The deep-corner drive is the usual drive serve and the least risky. If you can keep this serve on a low trajectory, close to the floor, a



High lob: The ball is hit softly and floats back before dropping dead at the back wall.



Deep corner drive: Drive the ball low and hard toward the rear corner without touching the side wall. The ball should be low enough to bounce twice before hitting the ball wall.



Short-corner drive. Drive the ball low and hard with your target the side-wall-floor crotch, just beyond the short line.

ceiling shot is difficult to execute from it. Since a ceiling shot is the safest serve return, any serve that hampers it is a good serve. Many players will undercut the ball slightly, in order to make it stay low after the first bounce. The target is the back-corner crotch on the second bounce, and don't serve it too deep or it will rebound off the back wall for an easy return. Most pros will serve a deep-corner drive from a position slightly to the left of center. You may be called for a screen if the ball does not pass at least 18 inches from your body.

Develop a serving motion that allows you to go to either side with these serves without signaling the direction in advance. The short-corner drive to the right is always worth a few surprise points if you can hide your intent until contact.

The Lob Serve

The lob serve is a soft floater designed to force a shoulder-high return from back court. Easy to return but hard to return aggressively. There are three variations.

The High Lob Serve

The high lob serve is hit softly and high on the front wall so as to arch gently over the short line, graze the side wall head-high about four feet from the back wall, and drop dead in the corner. It takes a touch of a watchmaker to hit this one right. The margin for error is slim. If you can't hit it perfectly, don't hit it at all.

The Wallpaper Lob

For the wallpaper lob, take a position close to the side wall. Hit the ball, with either backhand or forehand, high on the front wall near the corner, so that it hugs the side wall throughout its entire course and dies in the back corner. There is an added risk here: If the ball touches the side wall before hitting the front wall, it is loss of serve without a second chance.

The Garbage Serve

The garbage serve is a half lob. The object is to hit a soft, shoulder-high floater a bit deeper without hitting the side wall. If hit to the proper depth, it leaves nothing but a shoulder-high back-court return. If controlled, this is a very effective serve to tame a kill-shot artist.

The Z-Serve

The Z-serve is not to be confused with the Z-ball; on the serve the ball must strike the floor before it hits the third wall. The concept

of infinite variation on the serve applies more to this type than to the lob and drive serves. By subtle changes in the server's position, and in the angle, speed, height, and depth of the shot, you can come up with literally dozens of Z-serves, but few players take advantage of the full range of possibilities.

The basic Z-serve is struck from left of center to a spot on the front wall two feet from the right corner so as to rebound off the side wall and come back across court. It should bounce at three-quarter court depth, hit the side wall chest-high, and die in the back-wall crotch.

As for the many variations, some players, for instance, will bounce the ball high and hit an overhead; some will hit it underhand and high on the front wall to combine it with a lob effect. And, of course, you can go to either side with all variations.

Variation One

Deliver variation one from closer to the left wall. Hit the shot lower and more sharply into the corner, so it will come back at an acute angle to a more shallow position. This serve will resemble the "action" of a standard Z-ball jumping crazily cross-court after hitting the floor and second side wall.

Variation Two

My favorite variation is to deliver the serve from the right of center into the right front corner, where it bounds diagonally back to the left. You can vary the angle so as to hit the second side wall after the bounce one time and the back wall the next. This will give rise to an unsettling mixture of spins. If it hits the back wall after the bounce, it will usually surprise the other player by rebounding straight forward, rather than toward the side wall.

Second Serves

To double-fault in racquetball is an unforgivable sin, because the legal target is very large and there's no net in the way as in tennis. But if your first serve goes astray, you must rearrange something that is safe and reliable and has a wide margin for error without being a setup. The medium-hard Z-serve to the backhand corner serves all these purposes. Don't be careless. Too many second-serve set ups are served up too casually and without thought.

After Serving

The moves the server makes after serving lead to some of the most common tactical

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The Serve

errors in the game. It is best to discuss this subject by reviewing what *not* to do.

1. *Don't* take your eye off the ball. The identity badge of the novice is revealed by his backside as he turns his back on the ball and plants himself like an oak tree in center court. He has no idea where the next shot is going. He sacrifices half a step of mobility by failing to watch the position and body language of the other player.

2. *Don't* fade back like a quarterback. One step behind the short line is far enough. If you fade back farther, you're going to be embarrassed by mediocre kill shots that you can't get up to. It's hard to reverse your direction when you are backpedaling.

3. *Don't* drift (or stay) to the side opposite the ball. This makes you vulnerable to the down-the-wall pass.

4. *Don't* take a position midway between the side walls. One step over, in the direction

of the ball, is correct. This not only gives you an edge in retrieving the down-the-wall kill shot return, but it puts your body in the line of flight of a cross-court pass—and it's legal. The only lane you must leave open is the straight shot to the front wall.

General Comments on Serving

1. Concentrate. Don't just bang the ball into play. You have 10 seconds to serve. Use the time. Plan the serve. Plan your next move. Plan your response to the most likely return. No serve should be too casual.

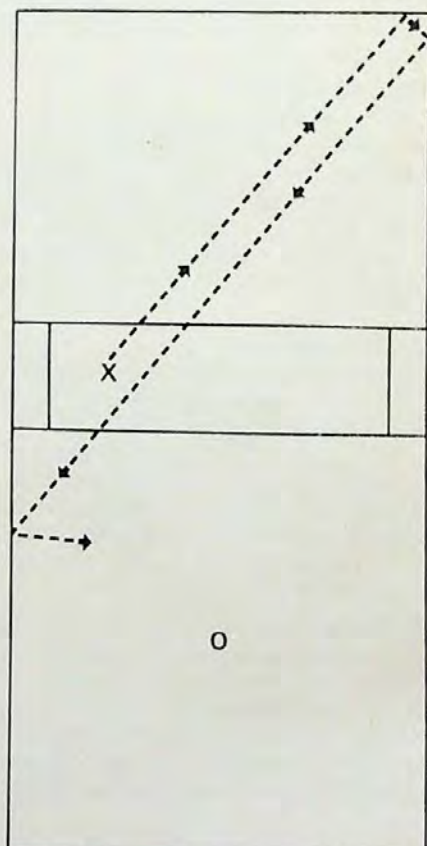
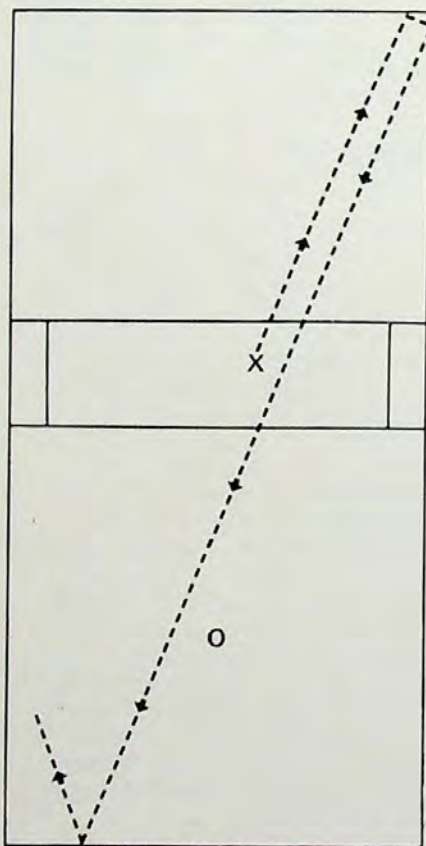
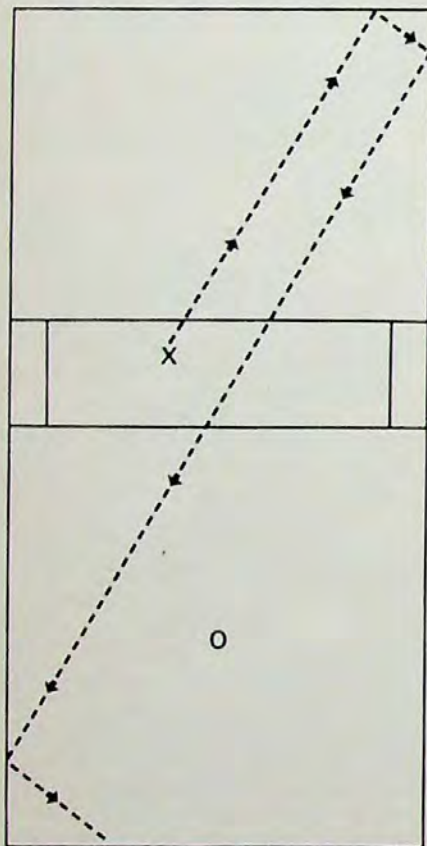
2. Be sure to develop a right-side serving game, to augment the usual serves to the backhand corner. Weakness against the Z-serve to the right is surprisingly common,

even among good forehand shooters. The pros make good use of this weapon, often neglected by the novice.

3. Be ready to compensate for your serving errors. If your Z-serve is coming in too shallow, look out for the cross-court pass—move over and back a step. If your drive serve is slightly too deep and comes up on the back wall, look out for the down-the-wall kill shot—move up a step.

4. Always test out your opponent with a wide variety of serves early in the game. You might discover a glaring weakness, and you can "go back to the well" when you need to most.

5. Take the most offensive chances on your second shot. You have him more out of position than you may ever have again. Be aggressive. Go for the winner even if you don't have a perfect setup. You should hit more fly kills after the serve return than at any other time.



The z-serve offers a number of variations: The standard shot (left) is hit with medium height and speed. You can also hit one lower and more sharply with acute angling (right), or one in which you serve from the right-of-center position.

Service Return and Positioning

By Lynn Adams

The advantage of serving is to put the receiver on the defensive, naturally. But just because you are the receiver doesn't mean you can't use strategy to maximize your position on the court.

As almost everyone knows, the serve can be used in two different ways: First it can be used to score instantly, and second, it can be used to elicit a weak return in order to set up a point on the next shot.

As the receiver, you should develop service return strategies and consider the options of positioning yourself. The server has the advantage of center court and being able to hit the ball wherever he or she wants, within their ability. You, then, must protect your game from the server's obvious advantages.

One protective device is the good old ceiling shot. The ball will come off the wall to the floor and bounce with such a high arc that the server will be forced to the back wall to recover it, with little room to swing. Thus you can move into center court and leave him or her with a very poor shot.

Of course, you should not use the ceiling shot exclusively. Part of good strategy is to be unpredictable. But generally, the ceiling re-

turn is a good shot anytime the ball comes to you above waist height.

Instead of the popular ceiling return, your options include down-the-line pasees, cross-court shots, and the kill shot. You should vary your use of returns and save some of the above-mentioned shots for the low hard drives your opponent will deliver. A poorly placed drive, in particular, offers you a good kill opportunity. It will come at you low and fast but will be placed more in the middle of the court than the server intended. However, if you are served a drive that you can't quite get set up for, a ceiling ball might still be in order.

Most servers, like my Ektelon teammate Jennifer Harding, will use power on a first serve. If that is short or long—usually, it will be short—they'll go with a "safer" second serve, like a Z-serve or high lob serve that lands in a back corner.

Of course, nothing is totally predictable. A lot depends on the abilities of the individuals playing, what stage the game is in and whether the server is trying to be unpredictable.

Another thing to keep in mind is that you do not want to "set up" the server. If the opportunity arises for you to hit the kill, pinch, or cross-court pass and thus get the serve, then do so. This type of shot will not arise often.

Never hit a shot down the middle. It is a perfect "set-up."

Most pros, including myself, agree that the only place to await service is in the center of the court about an arm's length from the back wall. If you stray to one side, the smart server will deliver the ball to the opposite side.

During the rally, positions are dependent on the location of you, your opponent, and the ball. Try to position yourself away from the walls and as close to center as possible. There is an area which extends five feet behind the short line from side wall to side wall in which you don't want your opponent shooting. If he and the ball meet in that area you'll probably lose out.

Try to stay "inside" your opponent's swing. This means your position should be between him and the middle axis of the court whether you're in front of him or behind him. On his forehand, if he is righthanded, you should be just to his left. On his backhand, you would be to his right.

As I said, if your opponent is hitting in front of you, your positioning becomes much less a factor than his accuracy. However, when you are closer to the front wall your positioning can make a difference. Since you cannot stand directly in front of him (unless you enjoy pain), and you do not want to become pinned between him and a wall, you must choose one side of the court or the other. Choose the side to which his follow-through goes if he is on the middle axis.

The other thing to remember in positioning yourself on a service return is to get off to a fast start. Don't wait for the ball to enter the back court before moving.

Move as it is hit.

As it is served, note its speed and direction and where it will hit the front wall. Adjust your movements accordingly and have your racquet up in the forehand or backhand position already.

It is a necessary skill to develop. Not much time elapses from when the ball leaves the server's racquet until it reaches you and you'll need every fraction of a second to get the best return.

This way, at least, you won't be caught flat-footed. You'll have overcome inertia and, pretty soon, you'll find that you learn to predict where the ball is headed.

This will make a big difference in your overall game and, when you are the receiver, you'll need every advantage you can get.



In positioning, note how Lynn Adams (right) stations herself away from the walls and as close to center court as possible.

Instruction Guide

Court Coverage

By Rich Wagner

The content of this manuscript will benefit those already possessing swiftness of foot in the four-walled, one-ceiling arena known as a racquetball court. To strive for the perfection of court coverage, one need only gain a complete understanding of space and time. In other words, the essence of court coverage is being there at the right moment.

LOOK AND YOU WILL SEE

From the very start of a match, my eyes rarely lose sight of the ball. Good eye contact is important in two ways: **1.** If you always watch the ball, obviously you will always know where your opponent has hit it. **2.** It enhances concentration.

Even when my opponent enters the service box and starts bouncing the ball three or four times before serving, I am still watching the ball. Even a deceptive server such as Jerry Hilecher will have a tough time scoring an ace off me because I am always watching the ball, not his body.

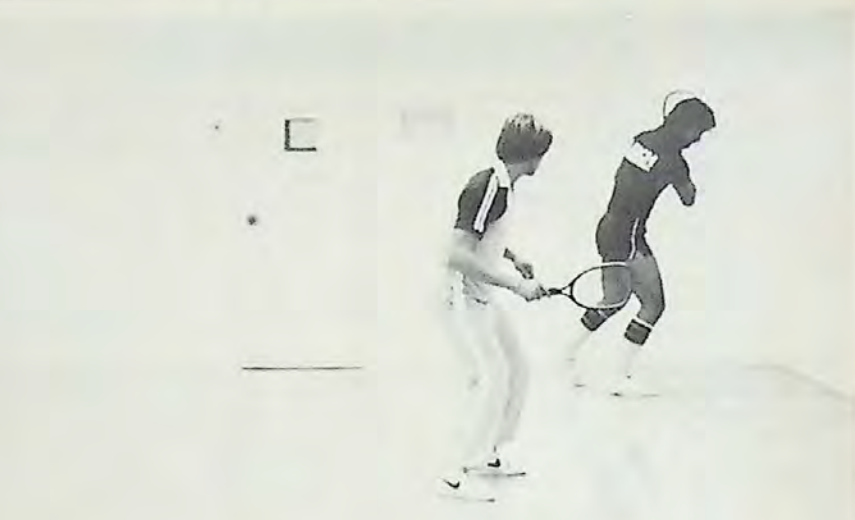
The same applies during a rally. As the battle unfolds, as strategies and positions change, one thing is constant: Eye contact. So how does watching the ball improve concentration? When the mind is able to focus on one thing, be it a goal or a ball, you become alert, able to visualize success.

Even when I step in the service box, I am concentrating on the ball. I take five of my allotted 10 seconds to watch and concentrate on the ball. If I ever lose concentration, I just return to focusing on the ball.

KNOW THY BODY POSITION

There are three things to be considered when discussing body positioning or the concept of being in the right place at the right time. Let's start with the time immediately following your serve. The biggest error made by novice players is that they tend to face the wall, leaving their backs facing the opponent. This is wrong. You cannot see the ball, nor your opponent. To correct this measure, pivot and face your opponent on a diagonal plane. Shuffle back two or three steps. This way you can see your opponent, cut off a cross-court angle and watch where he is about to hit the ball.

When returning the serve, you should be about one racquet's length from the back wall and about a step closer to your forehand



Note how Wagner faces his opponent diagonally after the serve, and how this position changes as his opponent moves in. If he is back, you are forward. As he gets further forward, you stay a few steps behind him.

side. Why forehand side when I have a weaker backhand? Because physiologically, most people are weaker moving in that direction. When stepping toward the backhand side, the step and stride coincide better; your arm and stance match up better in relation to your hitting area.

The third discussion concerns the rally. When your opponent is set to hit a shot from back court, think of your position on the serve. Face him diagonally about three steps in front of him. But when the shots are taken from closer in, your position strategy changes. As he gets further forward, you get further back. If my opponent is 3/4 back, instead of being a few feet in front of him, I may be only a step. When he is at the short line, I may be right next to him. As he gets closer to the front wall, I position myself behind him. Again, however, you should always be a little bit diagonal to your opponent.

KNOW THY OPPONENT'S POSITION

You should be watching your opponent as well as the ball. But how to do both? You watch the ball directly and you watch the opponent with peripheral vision. You are seeking to know where your opponent is, which will give you a better idea of what area to cover next.

As you are covering his shot, take notice of his or her foot position, the height at which he will hit the ball and the type of shot taken. Also take into account the "bread and butter"

factor. Some people are predictable. They almost always take the same shot from a certain position. You shouldn't automatically assume that your opponent will hit where you think he will, but you can be leaning in that direction. This will give you a jump on the ball and give you the chance to make a well-executed return.

IF THE SHOE FITS, DON'T TRIP

Believe it or not, there is a proper method of getting to the ball. In racquetball, a shuffling motion is the main foot pattern. The proper shuffle is made by moving the feet together and apart, side by side. You should always be on your toes or on the balls of your feet. The lower the center of gravity, the better.

Let's take the serve for example. After serving, you rotate out of the box and shuffle diagonally toward your opponent. If he hits a ceiling ball, you shuffle to deep court.

But what about the times you have to run for the ball? The times when shuffling isn't going to get you there fast enough? There is a difference in running for a racquetball and running in a sprinter's race. When going after a ball, your knees should be bent. You want to be close to the ground. This is necessary because when you do get to the ball, you want to be low enough to hit a good offensive shot.

A sprinter takes long strides. A racquetball player should take short, quick steps. With longer, sprinter-like steps, you will probably overrun the ball. Or the ball will jam you as you are about to shoot, and you won't be able to take a full swing.

THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

The most important part of court coverage is the flow toward center court. The person who maintains control of center court for the duration of the match will most often win. But just to be there is not the important factor. It is how a player "flows" there.

If my opponent is prepared to hit a shot from the deep left corner following a serve, I move toward him on that diagonal line we talked about earlier, while still watching the ball and him. As he begins to stroke the ball, I begin to shuffle towards center court. If the shot is a kill attempt down the line, I continue my movement forward. If the shot is a cross-court pass, I flow to the center, pivot around,



As the opponent begins to stroke the ball, Wagner continues his movement forward in order to get to the shot quicker.

Instruction Guide

Court Coverage



If the opponent hits a cross-court shot, Wagner, from center court, pivots around to get it.

and cut it off at the right side of the court.

Being able to flow has another major advantage. You get a running start. If you are already moving, you will get to the ball faster, and consequently you will have more time to set up for a shot.

THE CHANGING TIDE

Remember when I was telling you about center court? Well, I am now going to modify what I said. Center court is not always center court. The speed of the ball has a lot to do with it.

The faster the ball is hit, the deeper center court becomes. The slower the ball is hit, the shallower center court becomes.

If a ball is hit fast at chest-high level, it will have a tendency to rebound off the back wall. Thus, your center court area moves a little further toward back court because that is where you will set up to hit the return.

TAKE A STAND

There is no law that requires you to give your opponent 100 percent of the court from which to hit a shot. You have to give your



Wagner shows how one can "cheat" by cutting off part of the opponent's court. But . . .

opponent a clear shot, but you can "cheat" a little, and cut off portions of the court.

Let us assume your opponent is hitting from the deep left corner of the court. You should be standing two or three steps in front of him, facing him diagonally. You are, in effect, giving him a down-the-line shot, but are legally cutting off his cross-court shot.

You don't want to get too close to your



. . . You can't get too close or you will be called for an avoidable hinder.

opponent so that he hits you with the racquet, but don't give him any more of the court than he is entitled to.

HE WHO HESITATES IS LOST

What do you do after you hit a shot? Most players stand in deep court and watch those pretty shots. But the next thing you know, your opponent has moved into front court to rekill your shot.

After hitting the ball, follow your shot. I don't mean to run toward the front wall. But hit the shot and move towards the area in which you hit it. This will make your opponent think a little because he knows you will be there to cover his shot. If you remain in back court, all he has to do is pinch and you are out of position.

DRILLS

Proper court coverage means proper care of the legs. Stretching is a must. Your legs must be kept strong, yet flexible.

Besides stretching, I use a court drill which helps get my legs warmed up prior to a match while giving me the feel of the court.

Start at the back right corner of the court, run racquetball style to the front wall, shuffle along to the left front corner, peddle backwards and then shuffle back to the starting point. Repeat several times.

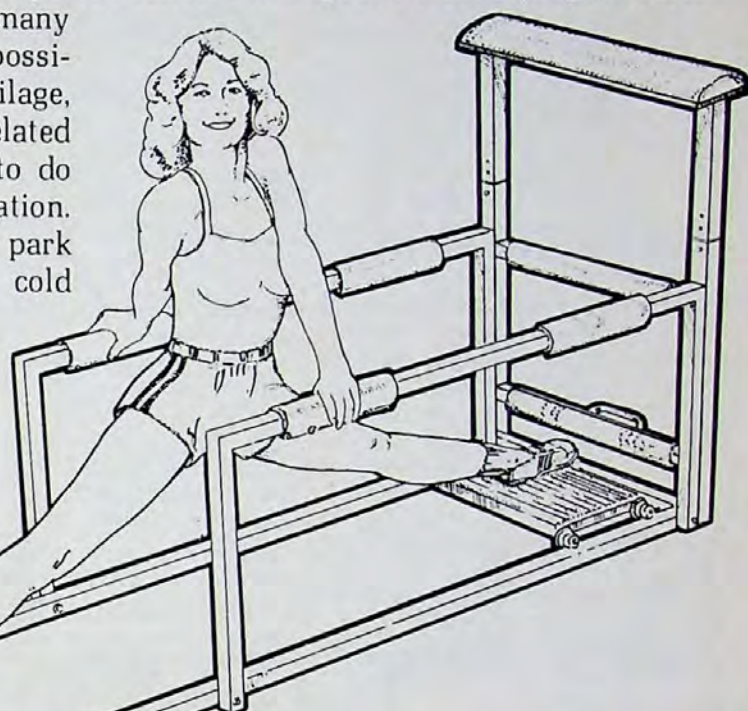
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Instruction Guide

The Ceiling Ball

By Charles Garfinkel

The most prevalent shot in racquetball today is the ceiling ball. Players used to hit a ceiling ball three to five feet back from the front wall on the ceiling. But because of the great differences in the bounce of racquetballs today, this is no longer true. You may find yourself hitting a ceiling ball anywhere from five inches to 10 feet back on the ceiling, depending on the liveliness of the ball.

If used correctly, the ceiling ball can be very effective. Why? The high bounce caused by a correctly hit ceiling ball forces an opponent into the deep corners of the court. Usually, an opponent is forced to hit a shot that is very high in the air and awkward to return. His safest return is to hit another ceiling ball.

To find the optimum spot on the ceiling for your ceiling shot, you should stand about five feet from the back wall. You should then hit ceiling balls until you find "your" spot on the ceiling.

How can you tell? After hitting a ceiling ball, the ball should hit the front wall, ricochet towards the back wall, and then either die on the lower back wall, or bounce again just before hitting the back wall.

Since most ceiling balls are hit from the deep back court, it is very important to hit them correctly. On the forehand ceiling ball, you must turn sideways with your racquet back. You should then step forward with your left foot and hit forward and upward. Finish with a high follow-through.

On the backhand ceiling ball, you are basically doing the same thing. However, you step forward with your right foot.

On both the forehand and backhand ceiling balls, it is imperative that from start to finish you have a smooth, easy swing. Punching or chopping at the ball only results in a poorly executed ceiling ball which may fall short or catch the side wall. This usually leaves a set-up for your joyous opponent.

Once you have found the ideal spot on the ceiling to hit your ceiling ball, you should practice 25 to 50 ceiling shots on the forehand and the backhand side. Try to hit your ceiling shots as close to the side wall as possible, without hitting the side wall. These types of wallpaper shots will make it very difficult for your opponent to return the ball accurately.

To hit cross-court ceiling balls, you should practice with a partner. Hit your cross-court ceiling balls slightly to the left or right of center, depending on whether you're hitting from the forehand or backhand side.

Again, be sure that you don't catch the side wall, as this will leave your opponent with an easy shooting opportunity.

When returning the serve, the ceiling ball is the shot that should be used the most, especially if you're playing against a server who hits hard drive serves.

The question then arises, "How will I have time to return the serve to the ceiling if I can barely get my racquet on the ball?"

The easiest way to acclimate yourself to this

type of serve is to practice against a hard-driving server.

To make your practice session more enjoyable, have your serving partner continually serve until one of you reaches 15 points (you both score points as in squash). This gives your partner practice serving and also gives you the needed practice of getting used to a serve hit with great power.

With your partner continually serving, you have the opportunity to gauge your movement to the serve. More important, it will help you to set and properly execute a good ceiling ball.

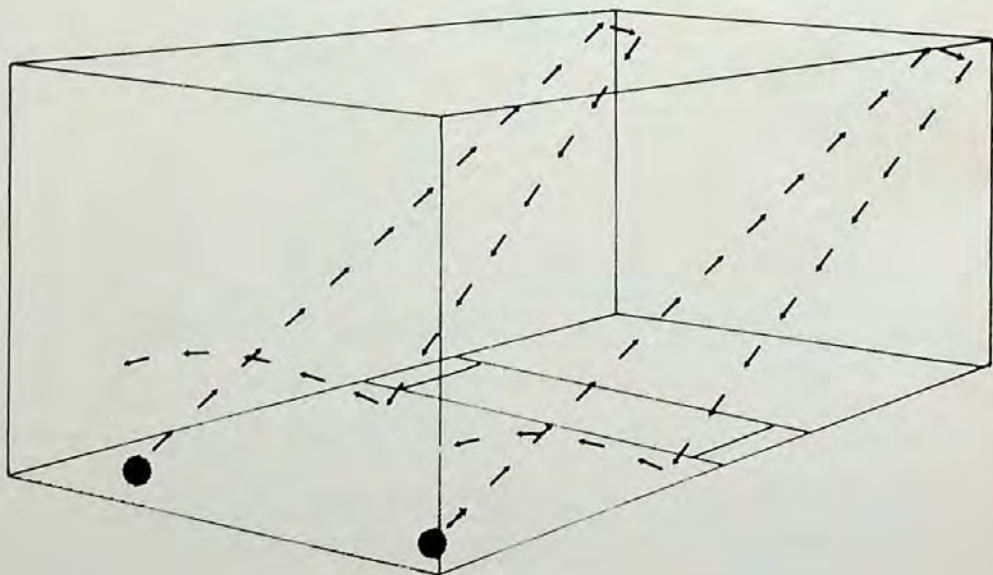
Being able to execute a good ceiling ball off the return of serve will force the server to retreat to the back court. Many times, this will give you the opportunity to take over the strategic center court position.

As to where your ceiling ball return should go, the ideal shot is to hit directly down the line. Many players make the mistake of trying to return every serve to the backhand side even if they are hitting from the deep right corner. The correct shot from the deep right corner is down the forehand line.

Many times a cross-court ceiling ball to the backhand side from the forehand side of the court catches the side wall. This results in easy kill shot attempts for the server.

On other serves such as the z serve and lob the ceiling ball return is still the best. Of course, there are times when you'll be able to hit a kill shot or passing shot off the return of serve.

The ceiling ball is the most prevalent shot in the game today. The high bounce causes your opponent to relinquish his center court position and move into the deep corners.



The ceiling ball is especially effective against a power hitter. The faster the ball is hit, the better he likes it. However, you will greatly frustrate him by continually hitting ceiling balls from which he cannot generate any power. In fact, you'll be able to use his power to your advantage.

Usually the power hitter is so frustrated that he starts hitting overheads to break up the ceiling ball pattern. However, his overheads usually fly off the back wall or side walls, giving you the opportunity for many good shots.

The ceiling ball is also effective when your playing opponents are short in stature, especially if you're hitting to the backhand side. The high bounce of the ceiling ball often makes it difficult for short players to hit the return shot with sufficient power.

The ceiling ball is also an excellent shot to use against a lefthander if it is hit correctly. You must remember that most of your ceiling balls will be hit cross-court from your backhand side, because the lefthander will probably be hitting to that side.

If you hit your cross-court ceiling balls correctly, you could be rewarded with many easy set-ups. This would be due to your lefthanded opponent catching the side wall with his returns.

If you are in excellent shape, you can use the ceiling ball on a regular basis. This will wear your opponent down. Although this type of game may be boring to the spectators and your opponent, you'll eventually find your tired opponent giving you many easy returns.

The ceiling ball is also an excellent shot to use if you're behind in a match.

But there are ways to counteract a ceiling ball. First of all, know how to hit a good overhead drive.

Watching your opponent out of the corner of your eye just before you hit your ceiling ball will help you. You'll be able to quickly decide on the side of the court to which it would be most advantageous for you to hit the overhead drive.

If hit correctly, the shot will force your opponent to hit an off-balance return. This could result in a set-up for you.

Other shots that are especially effective in breaking up ceiling ball rallies are z-balls and around the wall shots. But you must be careful to keep them off the back and side walls.

If you're playing someone whose ceiling balls are hit too hard or too soft, you could have a field day. Usually these types of shots result in your having excellent court position in front of your opponent.

Because he is blocked out of the play, the ideal shots for you to hit are straight-in kills or side wall pinch shots.

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Instruction Guide

The Passing Game



By Mike Yellen

It may never replace the killshot for thrills and chills, but the pass is a much better all-around weapon.

Because of the large target area on the front wall, a player can turn to the pass in most situations. Even if you're off-balance or on the run, or if your opponent is controlling center court and has you deep in the back court, you still can make an offensive passing return rather than having to fall back on a ceiling ball or garbage shot.

Of course, there are plenty of players who are able to kill the ball off-balance, on the run or standing on their heads (it seems to be a prerequisite for the higher levels of competition), but that doesn't change the fact that the percentages have a way of catching up with you eventually.

The pass is an end run around your opponent. Your goal is to get the ball past him or her close to the floor.

Once that is accomplished, recoveries are rare. Your opponent will be left scrambling after the ball like a man chasing a bug.

About the only return available to him is a high lob off the back wall but, nine times out of 10, that return will be weak.

There are three types of passes: Down-the-line, cross-court and wide-angle cross-court. They are more or less self-explanatory, but

let's look at the guidelines for choosing the different shots.

In general, you should go to a pass only if your opponent is in the forward two-thirds of the court. If he is deep in the back court, you should use a pinch or kill.

In most passing situations, your opponent will be either in front of you or next to you. The only exception I can think of is when he is trapped against a side wall when you are shooting. But that is a lapse on his part anyway and you could do just about anything and get the point.

For the sake of simplicity, let's assume that you and your opponent are both right-handed and playing good position. The pass you choose depends on the positioning of both of you.

Starting with both of you side by side in center court, you can hit either a backhand or

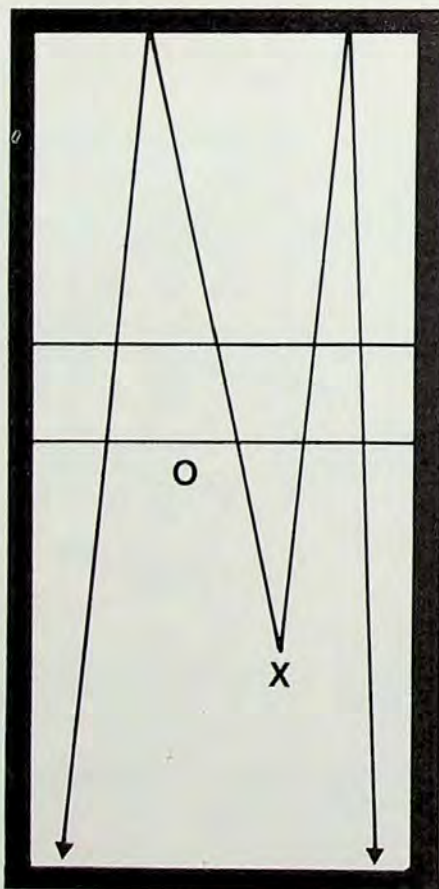
forehand down-the-line, depending on whether your opponent is to your left or right.

For the forehand, contact the ball waist-high or lower (the lower the better), but make sure that it doesn't contact the wall higher than three feet from the floor.

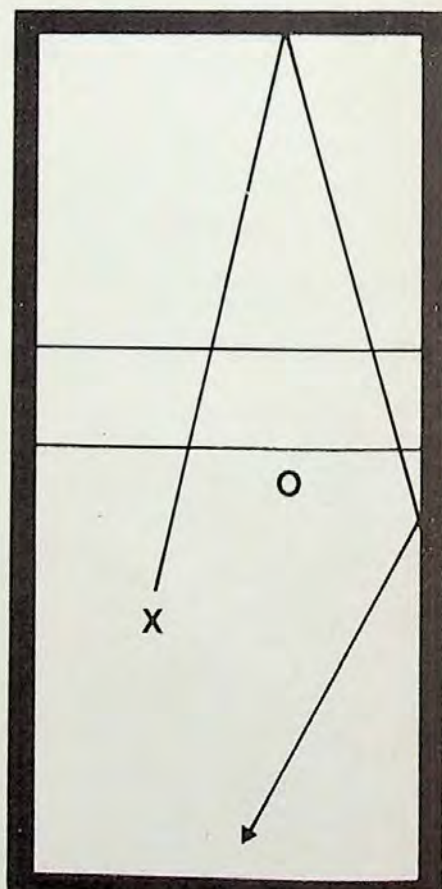
You need put only about three-quarter speed on the ball. Concentrate on racquet control and ball placement. The idea is to have the ball hug the side wall on the way back.

You want it to bounce twice before it reaches the back wall. If it comes off the back wall, your opponent may have a down-the-line opportunity of his own.

The determining factors, of course, are the ball's height off the front wall and its pace. Another advantage of the pass over the kill is that you need only put moderate pace on the ball for the shot to be successful. That saves



When hitting from back court, a player has two passing shot choices: Down-the-line or cross-court.



If your opponent seems to be cutting off your passing shots, widen the angle. The shot should rebound off the side wall about even with your opponent.

your strength and lets you concentrate on accuracy.

The most common mistake players make on the backhand side is to step forward for the shot just as they do on the forehand side. But the body mechanics are different and, just as you have to adjust your grip for a backhand shot, you also have to adjust your approach to compensate for the difference between an open and closed swing.

The proper footwork for a shot that goes straight down the line is to step straight toward the side wall. It feels funny at first, but you can pick it up with a little practice.

By stepping lightly forward on your backhand shot, you turn your down-the-line into a cross-court pass which brings us to our next situation. Try that shot if your opponent is crowding over to your side of the court, anticipating a down-the-line. That leaves a wide shooting area for the cross-court.

The same is true on the forehand. It's your forward foot placement which determines the ball's direction. On the forehand, a down-the-line would result from stepping toward the front corner and a cross-court from opening up your stance a little as you step in.

The above strategies also apply if you are behind rather than beside your opponent with one exception. If you are behind an opponent who is planted smack in center court, he may be able to cut off passes on either side.

That isn't true for every player, but someone with good lateral movement such as my Ektelon teammate Dave Peck will cut and kill the normal pass.

That's when you should give your cross-court passes a little wider angle to get around him. The wide-angle cross-court rebounds off the front wall and into the side wall about even with your opponent before continuing on into the back court.

If the ball strikes the side wall behind him, its angle will be similar to a normal cross-court and he may be able to cut it off. If the ball strikes too far ahead of him, it will be angling toward him on the rebound.

The correct wide-angle shot travels in somewhat of a semicircle just out of your opponent's reach.

One of the advantages of shooting from behind your opponent is that you have a better view of his position and to which direction he is leaning.

The disadvantage is that his low shots have a better chance of success than yours because he is closer to the front wall.

A good passing game helps you turn that around by keeping your opponent on the move. By moving your opponent from side to side, he or she will probably spend the match working a lot harder than you are. That can mean the crucial difference when it comes time to play a tiebreaker.

Getting Out Of A Corner



By Davey Bledsoe

It's one thing to swing with the golden stroke. But it's another thing if you can't get your body situated in the proper position with the proper footwork to set-up for that stroke. What I am trying to show here is utilization of proper footwork out of the corners to get the body in the right relationship with the ball.

If your opponent has just hit a low, hard passing shot from the right corner, it will do one of two things. It could strike the left side wall first and travel around a corner, so to speak, then hit the back wall and head out toward the service return position. These are

called corner shots. If your opponent's passing shot does not hit the side wall, it will strike the back wall first, then head out down the line.

When it comes to corner shots, people have a tendency not to move their feet. They stay at a certain point and hope the ball comes close to them, so they can get a good shot. The problem is that the ball usually comes in too close and the player is jammed.

People also have a tendency to chase the ball around and hit it with the forehand. This can be done but I don't advise it. The ball is coming in at such an angle and at such a high speed that the player ends up reaching for it. You get a spinning effect, and you have no control with this type of movement unless you time it perfectly. I'd rather see a player use proper footwork, get into proper position, and then hit a backhand.

The way to correct this problem is as follows: You are actually going to take the same pattern the ball does. As it hits the side wall, take a step toward the corner with your right foot. As it comes across and hits the back wall, step across with your left foot. As it comes out, step back with it. Then put your weight on your right foot and hit it with a backhand. Of course, you have to learn the timing to this stroke, but once you get it, you will see how much time, energy and footwork you have saved yourself.

Now, supposing the ball doesn't hit the side wall first. Let's say it hits the back wall and starts moving out pretty fast toward the front wall.

Most novice players have a tendency to reach for it. Again, with proper planning and footwork, you can set up for an easy kill shot.

If the ball strikes the back wall first, take a step with the right foot in the direction of the back wall. This sets up your momentum. Your left foot should have the brunt of your weight as the ball is hitting the back wall.

Then follow the ball off the wall and parallel its motion by taking cross-over side steps. Take as many steps as necessary until the ball drops into the power hitting zone.

Many novice players don't take this straddle step. Instead, they open up in a semi-run to try and catch up with the ball. You may hit it, but you will have lost something on the swing.

With the side step, you simply cross one foot in back of the other. But only do it as needed. If the ball doesn't come off the back wall as far, you may only need one cross-over

Instruction Guide

Corner Shots

step. If the ball does accelerate, you will have to take more steps. A good warm-up for this is the old football cross-over drill. Practice a few of these steps on the court before your match. It gets your feet warmed up and ready to go.

These corner area shots differ from regular

shots, mainly in body placement. Often times, in regular shots, you can use an open stance whereupon you are facing more toward the front wall as you hit the ball.

But, if you haven't mastered the open stance, you should try and have your body

facing the side wall as you hit.

With these corner area shots, you are turning to face the back wall at one point and your hips (or shoulders) are facing into that corner. You then come out of the corner and you are facing the side wall, ready to hit.



When most shots come out of a corner, the novice player tends to stand there and let the ball jam him or her. Bledsoe shows how you follow the ball around, and as it comes out of the corner, you step back and use your backhand to hit it.



When the ball comes off the back wall, hard and fast, the novice player has a tendency to run after it, which most likely will mean a long reach for the shot. Bledsoe says you should take cross-over steps while following the ball to set up for the shot.



Strategy

By Dave Peck

Okay, so you already know all about court strategy. You know you're supposed to control center court, play the percentages and concentrate on putting the ball wherever your opponent isn't.

So, what I will cover in this article is your mental approach to the game, the overall strategy that ties these specifics together.

The most important thing to remember is to play your own game. The second most important thing to remember is to keep your opponent from playing his. These are really two sides of the same coin.

Each player has his own individual collection of strengths and weaknesses. Most fit into either the control or power categories. But those differing abilities make for infinite variations within those categories.

Are you a power hitter with a great serve and kill shot, while your opponent is a good passer and ceiling game specialist? Then you want to make sure that most of the game is played in the serve-and-shoot mode rather than as a contest of control.

You may be so hot that you can beat your opponent at his own game, but don't bet on it. A surer way to go is to be yourself and let the contest be decided on your terms.

There are plenty of analogies in other sports. The Sugar Ray Leonard/Roberto Duran fights are good examples. Sugar Ray is a classic boxer, a control stylist whose counterpart in racquetball would be someone like my Ektelon teammate Mike Yellen. Roberto is a slugger and mugger, a power player like myself or Marty Hogan.

What a boxer should do is stay outside a brawler, using his better reach and quicker hands to wear him down. But Duran had spent so much time before their first fight calling Leonard a sissy, that Sugar Ray thought he had to prove his masculinity by standing in and fighting it out with Roberto. Bad move. He was beaten.

The second fight, though, Leonard went back to being himself and made a fool out of Duran. It's the same thing with racquetball. Know yourself and your opponent and do it your way, not his.

I know what you're thinking: "That's easy for Peck to say. He plays the same guys all the time on the pro tour, while I never know who I'm going to see in an amateur tournament."

That's true to a certain extent, but the other side of it is that everyone is always adjusting their game. Yellen, for example, used to be a strictly control player and the power hitter used to get around him by killing everything.



To offset Dave Peck's power, Laura Martino tries to keep him off-balance by not letting him set up for a kill shot.

Now he has developed a power game of his own and, with the added pressure, the hitters can't shoot as often on him.

Then, too, some days one thing is working for you and, other days, you've lost that strong shot and have to find another strength. Players' abilities even change from game to game in a match. That's what makes the game so interesting.

No, it's better to be able to analyze what's happening with yourself and your opponent as you go along. Take an ad hoc approach. Have a game plan going in, but be ready to make adjustments.

Is your kill shot skipping? Try more pinches. Is your opponent cutting off your passes? Widen the angle. Is he killing the ball a little too neatly in center court? Get him out of there with passes and ceiling balls.

Early on in the first game, you should have figured out whether your opponent is a control player or a shooter.

If he's a shooter, he will drive the serve, hoping for an ace or weak return. Unless you put the serve away or execute an effective ceiling ball, he'll try to rekill it immediately.

He'll try to speed up the game, keep the pressure on you with hard shots on the theory that you can't hit what you can't see. It's the old serve-and-shoot.

If you're a hitter yourself, you can try to outshoot him. Then it's just a matter of who has the biggest forearms.

If you have weaker shots, you try to pass him, keep him off-balance and deep in the back court where the shooting percentages aren't so great. You try to prolong the rallies and wear him out.

You also try to slow the game down. That can throw a lot of power hitters out of the groove, especially in the lower ranks. They thrive on speed and power and sometimes

overreact to soft shots or a change of pace.

Use your time-outs when your opponent gets hot, even if it's in the first five minutes of the game. You can also lift your racquet for 10 seconds after every point.

A power hitter is in the service box quick, the adrenaline is pumping, he's ready to go. Break it up for him. This is all another way of saying: Control the momentum of the game.

You can pretty much reverse the strategy if you're a power hitter in the clutches of a control player. He's passing to one corner, then the other and alternating it with pinches so that you're running from the forecourt to the back court and side to side.

Strategy number one is to cut those shots off and put them away. That could be hard to do because you will probably be on the run and off balance. But grab the momentum of the point while you're still in the service box. Serve and shoot.

Never mind those interminable ceiling rallies. Keep it fast and hard.

One word of caution here. There is a fine line to be drawn between risk taking and just plain stupid shots. You want to bend the percentages but not break them.

Some shots, a chest-high lob for example, should automatically be returned to the ceiling. A lot of racquetball situations call for automatic responses.

It doesn't really matter whether your opponent is a classic power or control player or some combination of both. Most people will be the latter.

Your job is to keep your eyes open, analyze what is going on and come up with a solution to counter it within your own individual shooting abilities.

The real secret to good racquetball strategy is just to think during the match, nothing more and nothing less.



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Santa Ana, California 92704

Instruction Guide

Racquetball Conditioning

By Dave and Gregg Peck

RBI: Let's talk about overall conditioning as it relates to racquetball.

DP: Obviously, we play a lot of racquetball. But racquetball is not the mainstay of conditioning. We also participate in a Nautilus training program. The program involves strengthening heart-lung capacity as well as overall strength.

One of the reasons we do this type of program as opposed to, say, jogging is that with jogging, your natural reaction is to start slowing down when you get tired or winded. With this program, you get a trained instructor to take you through a circuit program. The instructor is pushing you constantly. You

don't have the opportunity to slow down.

We go through cardiovascular workouts which involve going from one machine to another as fast as possible and then going into total fatigue on each machine. You want to hit fatigue level. What this does is get your heart rate up. Each workout lasts about 30 minutes. The beginning racquetball player should always go through the circuit with an instructor first, so he or she can learn how to do the machines properly.

RBI: How many repetitions are recommended?

GP: Eight to 12. But you want to go in somewhat fatigued. The principle is to reach the fatigue level as fast as possible.

RBI: You mean, you want to go through this training after playing a hard hour or two of racquetball?

DP: Yes. There's no way you want to work out on the machines and then go play racquetball. It throws your timing off and everything else. You don't want to be exhausted during your match.

RBI: How many days a week do you go through this conditioning training?

GP: Three times or basically every other day. After you get to the point where you have improved your strength quite a bit, you can switch to every three days.

RBI: You said that a person should try and reach the fatigue level as fast as possible. Does that mean you try and blaze through the machines as fast as possible?

DP: You want to take the machine work as slow as possible—two counts down, four counts up—to get the full benefit. But you don't want to rest between machines. You



Top: The Rowing Torso emphasizes the main muscle groups used for a backhand follow through. Bottom: The pullover machine is good for the deltoids, lats and abdominal muscles.



want to finish the circuit as quickly as possible.

RBI: Talk about positive and negative forces and forced reps.

DP: When you are working on the machine by yourself, that is positive. You are forcing the machine to work. After you have done your regular routine, you then go into forced reps. This is where the instructor puts resistance on the machine. The instructor pushes against it. Let's say on the leg extensions, you have lifted the maximum weight. The instructor will then say, "Okay, now bring it back up." But they are pushing down on the machine, working against you.

(Editor's note: In the book Total Fitness: The Nautilus Way, Arthur Jones, founder of Nautilus Sports says, "When an exerciser lifts a weight, his muscles are performing positive work. Negative work is produced when an exerciser lowers a weight. In either case, the exerciser's muscles are working . . . during positive work the muscles are working to lift

the weight against the force of gravity and during negative work the muscles are still working against the force of gravity.")

RBI: Let's go over some of the machines and see how they directly relate to racquetball.

DP: You want to go through the whole circuit. You should always work the general areas first. Start off with the legs, then go to the upper torso or whatever. We do the hip and back machine first to strengthen the lower back, then we go into leg extensions, leg curls, pullover machine to hit the lats, then the rowing torso, double chest for the shoulders, and so on. When we go through the circuit, we know it's going to help our racquetball mechanics. The rowing torso, for example. That type of movement is an action similar to the backhand stroke. I visualize hitting a backhand while I'm on the machine.

There's also the double chest. When I'm going through that, I emphasize my forehand stroke. I know my elbow is going to lead with

the stroke, and I visualize it.

RBI: Doesn't it take a lot of discipline to go through a training program such as this?

GP: It's easier playing in a tournament than going through these workouts.

DP: It's a discipline to force yourself to do it, and then once you get in there, to force yourself to push. The instructor will say, "Does that hurt?" and you'll be thinking about quitting and your muscles are frying, and the instructor will say, "Okay, push some more." You have to overcome those mental barriers.

RBI: Do you lose quickness because of the extra muscular strength?

DP: Just the opposite. The quickness comes from muscular strength. People also say that these machines tighten you up. That's also wrong.

GP: This type of training involves flexibility. If you are flexible, you can't be tight.



Dave demonstrates one of two things you can use on the double shoulder machine. This helps with ceiling shots.



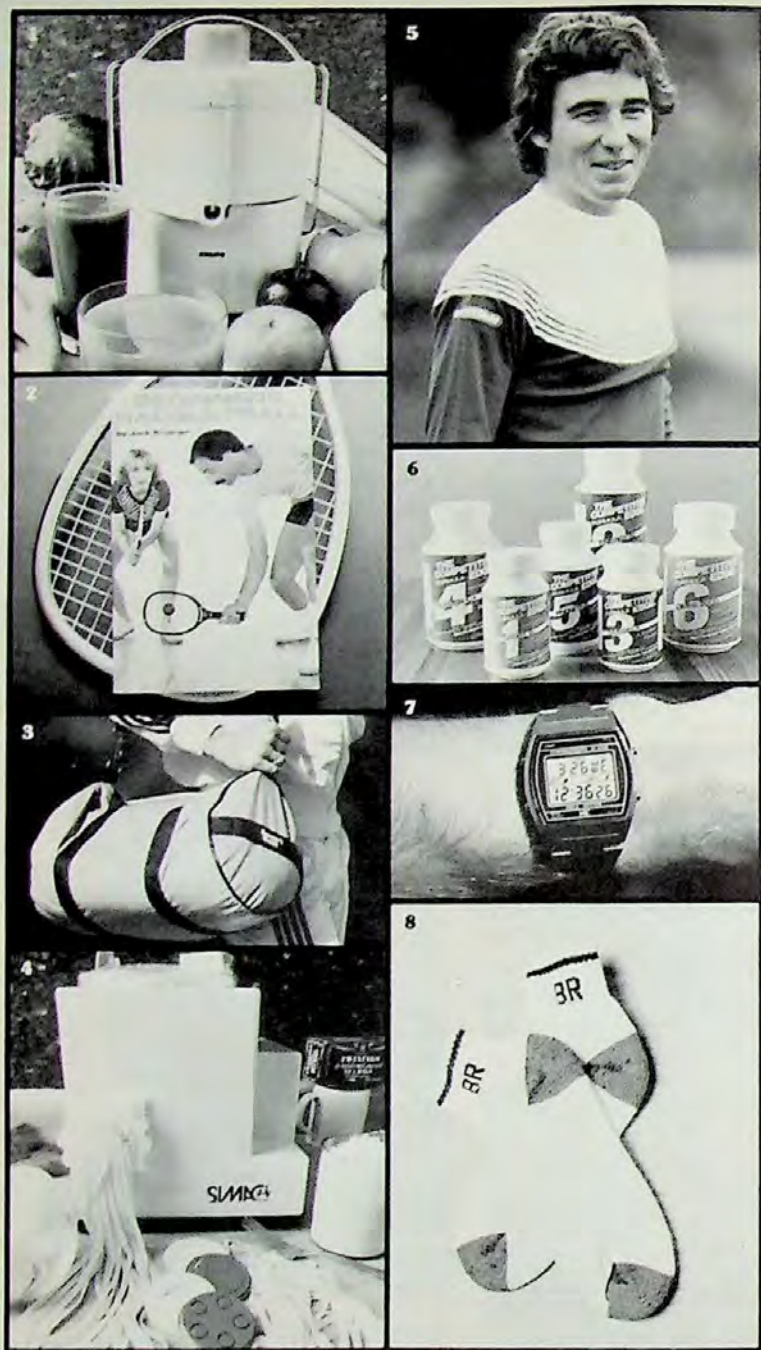
The double chest machine (top) can give you added pulling strength for the forehand. It works on your pectoral muscles. Bottom: The leg machine helps strengthen the hamstrings.

To improve quickness and leg stamina, Gregg suggests use of the leg extension machine which emphasizes the quadriceps.

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Instruction Guide

Rules of Racquetball

Editor's Note: This is reprinted from the Ektelon Guide To Better Racquetball. Rules are set by the American Amateur Racquetball Association. United States Racquetball Association rule differences are noted in parenthesis.

PART I—THE GAME

Rule 1.1—Types of Games

Racquetball may be played by two, three or four players. When played by two it is called "singles," when played by three "cutthroat," and when played by four "doubles."

Rule 1.2—Description

Racquetball, as the name implies, is a competitive game in which only one racquet at a time shall be used by each of the players.

Rule 1.3—Objective

The objective is to win each rally by serving or returning the ball so the opponent is unable to keep the ball in play. A rally is over when a side makes an error, or is unable to return the ball before it touches the floor twice, or if a hinder is called.

Rule 1.4—Points and Outs

Points are scored only by the serving side, when it serves an ace or wins a rally. When the serving side loses a rally, it loses the serve. Losing the serve is called an "out" in singles, and a "hand out" or "side out" in doubles. (USRA/NRC: Losing the serve in singles is called a "side out;" losing the first serve in doubles is called a "hand out.")

PART II—COURTS AND EQUIPMENT

Rule 2.1—Courts

The specifications for the standard four-wall racquetball court are:

(a) **Dimensions.** The dimensions shall be 20 feet wide, 20 feet high, and 40 feet long, with back wall at least 12 feet high.

(b) **Lines and Zones.** Racquetball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 1½ inch wide lines as follows:

(1) **Short Line.** The short line is midway between and is parallel with the front and back walls dividing the court into equal front and back courts.

(2) **Service Line.** The service line is parallel with and located five feet in front of the short line.

(3) **Service Zone.** The service zone is the space between the outer edges of the short and service lines.

(4) **Service Boxes.** A service box is located

at each end of the service zone by 18 inches from and parallel with each side wall.

(5) **Receiving Lines.** Five feet back of the short line, vertical lines shall be marked on each side wall extending three inches from the floor. See Rule 4.7(a).

Rule 2.2—Ball Specifications

(a) The specifications for the standard racquetball are: the ball shall weigh approximately 1.4 ounces, and at a temperature of 70-74 F. with a 100-inch drop rebound is to be 68-72 inches; hardness, 55-60 durometer.

Rule 2.4—Racquet Specifications

(a) **Dimensions.** The regulation racquet will have a maximum head length of 11 inches and width of nine inches. These measurements are computed from the outer edge to the racquet head rims. The handle may not exceed seven inches in length. Total length and width of the regulation racquet may not exceed a total of 27 inches.

(b) The regulation racquet must include a thong that must be securely wrapped on the player's wrist.

(c) The regulation racquet frame may be made of any material, as long as it conforms to the above specifications.

(d) The strings of the regulation racquet should be gut, monofilament or nylon. Metal or steel strings are permitted only if they do not mark or deface the ball.

PART IV—PLAY REGULATIONS

Rule 4.1—Serve

(a) The player or side winning the toss in the first game will have the option of serving or receiving in the first game. The player or side who loses the toss in the first game will have the option of serving or receiving in the second game. In a tie-breaker the player or team accumulating the greatest number of points in the first two games shall have the option to serve or receive. If the total number of points is even for both players or teams, a coin toss will be used to determine who shall have the choice of serving or receiving in the tie-breaker.

(b) **Start Games** are started by the referee's calling the score. (Zero serves zero.)

(c) **Place** The server may not initiate the pre-service motion from outside of the service zone. Stepping on the line (but not beyond it) is permitted. Server must remain in the service zone until the served ball passes short line. Violations are called "foot faults."

(d) **Manner.** A serve is commenced as the ball leaves the server's hand. The ball must bounce on the floor in the service zone and on the first bounce be struck by the server's racquet in an obvious attempt to serve the ball. The ball must strike the front wall first and on the rebound hit the floor back of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls. A balk serve or fake swing at the ball although the ball has only been bounced once, shall be deemed an infraction and be judged an "out," "handout," or "side out."

(e) **Readiness.** Once the end of play is signaled by "point, side out, hinder," etc. the receiver(s) is(are) given a reasonable amount of time, according to the judgment of the referee to get ready to receive the serve. According to the judgment of the referee, the score will be called when the receiver(s) is(are) ready to receive the serve. Once the score has been called the server has 10 seconds to put the ball into play.

Rule 4.2—Serve, In Doubles

(a) **Server.** At the beginning of each game in doubles, each side shall inform the referee of the order of service, which order shall be followed throughout the game. When the first server is out, the side is out. Thereafter, both players on each side shall serve until a hand-out occurs. It is not necessary for the server to alternate serves to their opponents.

(b) **Partner's Position.** On each serve the server's partner shall stand erect with their back to the side wall and with both feet on the floor within the service box until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called "foot faults."

(c) There will be an automatic screen serve in doubles matches when the ball goes behind the body of the server's partner.

Rule 4.3—Defective Serves

Defective serves are of three types resulting in penalties as follows:

(a) **Dead Ball Serve.** A dead ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve without canceling a prior illegal serve.

(b) **Fault Serve.** Two fault serves result in a hand-out.

(c) **Out Serve.** An out serve results in a hand-out.

Rule 4.4—Dead Ball Serves

Dead ball serves do not cancel any previous illegal serve. They occur when an otherwise legal serve:

(a) **Hits Partner.** Hits the server's partner on the fly on the rebound from the front wall while

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the server's partner is in the service box. Any serve that touches the floor before hitting the partner in the box is short.

(b) Screen Balls. Passes within 18 inches of the server and obstructs the view of the returning side.

(c) Court Hinders. Hits any part of the court that under local rules is a dead ball.

(USRA/NRC: A ball broken on the serve is a dead ball serve.)

Rule 4.5—Fault Serve

The following serves are faults and any two in succession result in a handout.

(a) Foot Faults. A foot fault results:

(1) When the server leaves the service zone before the served ball passes the short line.

(2) When the server's partner steps beyond the lines of the service box before the served ball passes the short line.

(3) When the server steps over the service or short line.

(b) Short Serve. A short serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits the floor on or in front of the short line either with or without touching one side wall.

(c) Three-Wall Serve. Any ball served that hits the front wall and on the rebound hits two side walls on the fly.

(d) Ceiling Serve. Any served ball that touches the ceiling after hitting the front wall either with or without touching one side wall.

(e) Long Serve. A long serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and rebounds to the back wall before touching the floor.

(f) Out of Court Serve. Any ball going out of the court on the serve.

Rule 4.6—Out Serves

Any one of the following serves results in a handout:

(a) Failure of Server. Failure of server to put the ball into play within 10 seconds of the calling of the score by the referee.

(b) Missed ball. Any attempt to strike the ball on the first bounce that results either in a total miss or in touching any part of the server's body other than the racquet.

(c) Non-Front Server. Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server or the server's partner, the ceiling, floor or side wall before striking the front wall.

(d) Touched Serve. Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server or the server's partner intentionally touches the served ball.

(e) Out-of-Order Serve. In doubles, when either partner serves out of order. Any points which may be scored during an out-of-order serve will be automatically void with the score reverting to the score prior to the out-of-order serve. The "out serve" shall be applied to the first server and the second server shall then be allowed to serve.

(f) Crotch Serve. If the ball hits the crotch in the front wall it is considered the same as hitting the floor and is an out. A crotch serve into the back wall is good and in play. A served ball hitting the side wall crotch (as in a "Z" serve) beyond the short line is good and in play.

(g) Fake or Balk Serve. Such a serve is defined as a noncontinuous movement of the racquet towards the ball as the server drops the ball for the purpose of serving.

Rule 4.7—Return of Serve

(a) Receiving Position. The receiver(s) must stand at least five feet back of the short line, as indicated by the three inch vertical line on each side wall, and cannot enter into this safety zone until the ball has been served and passes the short line. At that point the receiver(s) may enter the safety zone to return serve, however, neither the racquet nor body may infringe on the imaginary plane marked by the short line. A violation of this plane would result in a point for the server.

(b) Defective Serve. To eliminate any misunderstanding the receiving side will not catch or touch a defectively served ball until called by the referee.

(c) Legal Return. After the ball is legally served, one of the players on the receiving side must strike the ball with the racquet either on the fly or after the first bounce and before the ball touches the floor the second time to return the ball to the front wall either directly or after touching one or both side walls, the back wall or the ceiling, or any combination of those surfaces. A returned ball may not touch the floor before touching the front wall. It is legal to return the ball by striking the ball into the back wall first, then hitting the front wall on the fly or after hitting the front wall on the fly or after hitting the side wall or ceiling.

(d) Failure to Return. The failure to return a serve results in a point for the server.

Rule 4.8—Changes of Serve

(a) Hand out. A server is entitled to continue serving until:

(1) Out Serve. An out serve is made as described under Rule 4.6 or;

(2) Fault Serves. One makes two fault serves in succession under Rule 4.5 or

(3) Hits Partner. Partner is hit with an attempted return before the ball touches the floor a second time.

(4) Return Failure. Player or partner fails to keep the ball in play by returning it as required by Rule 4.7(d).

(5) Avoidable Hinder. Player or partner commits an avoidable hinder under Rule 4.11.

(USRA/NRC: Violation of the 10 second rule as stated in Rule 4.1(c).)

(b) Side out. In singles, retiring the server, retires the side. In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have been put out on the first serve as provided in Rule 4.2(a).

(c) Effect. When the server or the side loses the serve, the server or serving side shall become the receiver, and the receiving side, the server, and so alternately in all subsequent services of the game.

Each legal return after the serve is called a rally. Play during rallies shall be according to the following rules:

(a) One or Both Hands. Only the head of the racquet may be used at any time to return the ball. The ball must be hit with the racquet in one or both hands. Switching hands to hit a ball is an out. The use of any portion of the body is an out.

(b) One Touch. In attempting returns, the ball may be touched or struck only once by one player on the returning side (a carried ball is a ball that rests on the racquet in such a way that the effect is more of a "sling" or "throw" than a hit and shall be ruled a point or hand out as is applicable. In doubles, both partners may swing at, but only one may hit the ball. A violation of (a) or (b) results in a hand out or point.

(c) Return Attempts

(1) In singles, if a player swings at, but misses the ball in play, the player may repeat those attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor for the second time.

(2) In doubles, if one player swings at, but misses the ball, both the player and the partner may make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time. Both partners on a side are entitled to return the ball.

(3) Hinders. In singles or doubles, if a player swings at, but misses the ball in play, and in an attempt by either members of a team again to play the ball there is an unintentional

interference by an opponent, it shall be a hinder. (See Rule 4.10.)

(d) Touching Ball. Except as provided in Rule 4.10(a) (2), any touching of a ball before it touches the floor the second time by a player other than the one making a return is a point or out against the offending player.

(e) Out of Court Ball

(1) After Return. Any ball returned to the front wall on the rebound or on the first bounce goes into the gallery or through any opening in a side wall shall be declared dead and the serve replayed.

(2) No Return. Any ball not returned to the front wall, but which caroms off a player's racquet into the gallery or into any opening in a side wall either with or without touching the ceiling, side or back wall shall be an out or point against the players failing to make the return.

(f) Dry Ball. During the game, and particularly on service, every effort should be made to keep the ball dry. Deliberately wetting shall result in an out. The ball may be inspected by the referee at any time during the game.

(g) Broken Ball. If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken on the serve or during a rally, play shall continue until the end of the rally. The referee or any player may request the ball be examined. If the referee decides the ball is broken, a new ball shall be put into play and the point replayed.

(h) Play Stoppage.

(1) If a player loses a shoe or other equipment, or foreign objects enter the court, or any other outside interference occurs, the referee shall stop the play if such occurrences interfere with ensuing play or players' safety

Rule 4.10—Dead Ball Hinders

Hinders are of two types—"dead ball" and "avoidable." Dead ball hinders as described in this rule result in the point being replayed. Avoidable hinders are described in Rule 4.11.

(a) Situations. When called by the referee the following are dead ball hinders:

(1) Court Hinders. Hits any part of the court which under local rules is a dead ball.

(2) Hitting Opponent. Any returned ball that touches an opponent on the fly before it returns to the front wall.

(3) Body Contact. Any body contact with an opponent that interferes with seeing or returning the ball.

(4) Screen Ball. Any ball rebounding from the front wall within 18 inches of the body of a



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player on the side which just returned the ball, to interfere with or prevent the returning side from seeing the ball, if there is no fair chance to see or return the ball.

(5) Straddle Ball. A ball passing between the legs of the player on the side which just returned the ball, if there is no fair chance to see or return the ball.

(6) Other Interferences. Any other unintentional interference which prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball. (USRA/NRC: Back Swing Hinder. If there is body contact on the back swing the player must call it immediately.)

(b) Effect. A call by the referee of a "hinder" stops the play and voids any situation following, such as the ball hitting a player. No player is authorized to call a hinder, except on the back swing or from accidentally stepping on an opponent's foot. Such a call should be made immediately, as provided in Rule 3.5 (b). The decision of the referee will be final as to whether or not the violation impeded the ensuing rally.

(c) Avoidance. While making an attempt to return the ball, a player is entitled to have a direct path to the ball and an unobstructed view of the ball after it leaves the front wall. It is incumbent upon the players to give their opponents a free, uninhibited swing at the ball. This applies in doubles as well. It is not a hinder when one player interferes with his teammate.

(d) In Doubles. In doubles, both players on a side are entitled to a fair and unobstructed chance at the ball and either one is entitled to a hinder even though it naturally would be the partner's ball and even though the partner may have attempted to play the ball or may have already missed it. It is not a hinder when one player hinders his partner.

Rule 4.11—Avoidable Hinders

An avoidable hinder results in an "out" or a point depending on whether the offender was serving or receiving.

(1) Failure to Move. Does not move sufficiently to allow an opponent a shot.

(2) Blocking. Moves into a position effecting a block on the opponent about to return the ball, or in doubles, one partner moves in front of an opponent as the partner of that opponent is returning the ball.

(3) Moving Into Ball. Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent.

(4) Pushing. Deliberately pushes or shoves opponent during a rally.

(5) Moves so as to restrict opponent's swing so that player returning the ball does not have a free, unimpeded swing.

(6) Intentional Distractions. Deliberate shouting, stamping of the feet, waving the racquet, or any manner of disruption to the player who is hitting the ball.

Rule 4.12—Rest Periods

(a) Delays. Deliberate delay exceeding 10 seconds by the server or receiver shall result in a side out or point against the offender.

(b) Timeouts. During a game each player in singles or each side in doubles either while serving or receiving may request a "timeout" for a towel, wiping glasses, glove change or adjustment. Each "timeout" shall not exceed 30 seconds. No more than three "timeouts" in a game shall be granted each singles player or each team in doubles. No player may call a timeout once the ball is in play. Only two timeouts are allowed in the 15-point tiebreaker. See Rule 4.1(d).

(c) Injury. No timeout shall be charged to a player who is injured during a play. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes of rest. If the injured player is not able to resume play after a cumulative rest of 15 minutes the match shall be awarded to the opponent(s). On any additional injury to same player, the tournament director or referee, after considering any available medical opinion, shall determine whether the injured player will be allowed to continue. (USRA/NRC: Muscle cramps and pulls, fatigue and other ailments that are not caused by direct injury on the court will not be considered as an injury.)

(d) A timeout may be called by the referee at the request of a player and after substantiation by the referee, because of faulty equipment or uniform. Two minutes are to be allowed for any uniform adjustment needed and 30 seconds for any equipment adjustments.

(e) A two-minute rest period is allowed between the first and second game with a 10-minute rest period between the second and third game. (USRA/NRC: A five-minute rest period is allowed between the first and second games and a five-minute rest period between the second and third game.)

(f) Postponed Games. Any games postponed by referee shall be resumed with the same score as when postponed.

Rule 4.13—Technical Foul

The assessment of a technical foul on a player (or team in doubles) shall result in the loss of a point from the offending player's(s)

score. It shall not result in an "out" call if assessed against the server. It should be called by the referee whenever the referee feels that a player has executed or exhibited unsportsmanlike conduct either vocally or by any other means during the course of a match. The assessment of a third technical during the course of a match shall result in the automatic, immediate forfeiture of that match.

PART VI—ONE WALL AND THREE WALL RULES

Rule 6.1—One Wall and Three Wall Rules

Basically, racquetball rules for one-wall, three-wall, and four-wall are the same with the following exception:

One Wall. Court size—Wall shall be 20 feet in width and 16 feet high, floor 20 feet in width and 34 feet from the wall to the back edge of the long line. There should be a minimum of three feet beyond the long line and six feet outside each line and behind the long line to permit movement area for the players. Short Line—Back edge 16 feet from the wall. Service Markers—Lines at least six inches long parallel to and midway between the long and short lines, extending in from the side lines. The imaginary extension and joining of these lines indicates the service line. Lines are 1½ inches in width. Service Zone—Floor area inside and including the short, side and service lines. Receiving Zone—Floor area in back of short line bounded by and including the long and side lines.

Three-Wall Serve—A serve that goes beyond the side walls on the fly, is considered "long." A serve that goes beyond the long line on a fly, but within the side walls is the same as a "short." Court Size—short side wall—20 feet in width and 20 feet in height, 20 feet in length. Side wall shall extend back on either side from the front wall parallel 20 feet along the side wall markers. Side wall may extend from 20 feet at the front wall and taper down to 12 feet at the end of the side wall. All other markings are the same as four-wall.

Court Size—Long side wall 20 feet in width and 20 feet in height and 40 feet in length. Side wall shall extend back on either side 40 feet. The side wall may, but is not restricted to tapering from 20 feet of height at the front wall down to 12 feet at the 40 foot marker. All lines are the same as in four-wall racquetball.

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Racquetball, Pirate Style

Stargell, Foli, Garner, Madlock, Berra and other former world champions spend their off-season time on court.

By Tom Bird

The 1979 World Champion Pittsburgh Pirates dropped to a disappointing third place finish in 1980. But in anticipation of improving their record in the upcoming '81 season, the Pirates have joined leagues of ball players who have adopted racquetball as their major off-season training procedure.

Several Pirates play racquetball regularly, including Tim Foli, Jim Bibby, Phil Garner, Bill Madlock, Willie Stargell, Steve Nicosia, and Dale Berra. Though All-Star second baseman Garner is the veteran racquetballer on the club, having played three years longer than any of his teammates, experience isn't everything.

"Let's see I've played Foli and he beat me. I've played Oliver and he beat me. Hey, I haven't played anyone on our team who hasn't beat me," admits Garner. "Maybe I'll play Dave Parker while he's still limping around from that knee operation. Then I'll stand a chance."

Though Garner is not known as an All-Star racquetball player, he could someday be elected into the Tobacco Hall of Fame for rarely is he seen without a distinguishing mound of Redman protruding from his right cheek. Once, in fact, he was forced into a decision of either losing his chew or his racquetball game. His choice was surprising.

"I was like a cat trying to find a corner in a round room," recalls Garner. "I simply couldn't find a place on the racquetball court to spit and I didn't want to swallow that stuff, so I tried spitting in my pockets and that didn't work. Then, I tried spitting in my opponent's pockets and that didn't work either. Finally, I decided to set my spitton in the left rear corner of the court and wouldn't you know, the first shot I hit knocks the cup over."

"The tobacco juice went all over the floor and those nice white walls. I believe they were permanently stained. This forced me to give up chewing while playing racquetball because I couldn't find a place to spit."

Shortstop Foli performs everything for a purpose and one of his reasons for playing racquetball is a desire to win. Besides being rated as the top Pirate racquetball player on the basis of sheer determination, Foli finished second in a 1977 celebrity baseball tournament to Texas Ranger star Al Oliver. Since then, Foli has entered several other tournaments and has been equally successful.



Photo by Bill Redic

Stargell: "I didn't play much racquetball this off-season. I'm trying to stay away from reinjuring my knee."

Garner likens Foli's racquetball play to his baseball presence, one which netted him the highest fielding percentage for a National League shortstop in 1980.

"Foli plays racquetball just like he plays baseball—hard. He's always looking for an edge to beat you and he usually uses physical contact to gain it. In fact, he hit me more times at second base last year than I was hit by opposing players."

Foli's style of play has caused Garner to describe him as the relentless pursuer armed with spikes on his shoes and racquet, a deep piercing snarl, a bully visor, and two different racquetballs, a live one for when he serves and a dead one for which he exchanges it when his opponent serves.

"He has no friends and is completely blind to guilt when playing but he is a smart racquetball player and knows what to do. I also rate myself as a smart player but I guess I just don't know what to do with the ball," says Garner.

Third baseman Madlock witnessed Foli's exploits in the '77 celebrity tourney in Las Vegas and accurately describes the extent of his teammate's desire.

"I watched him play Pete LaCock (Kansas City Royals) and he was brutal. After the match, Pete left the court simply covered with welts left from the times Foli had hit him," says Madlock. "Preparing to play Foli is like preparing to go to war."

Yogi Berra's 24-year-old son, Dale, plays

Racquetball, Pirate Style



Phil Garner, left, is one of the most avid players but one who almost every Pirate on the team can beat. Right: Bill Madlock also gets on the court frequently.

for the Pirates and people notice some character resemblances to the former Yankee star.

The young Berra began playing racquetball approximately three years ago at his father's court club in New Jersey. Initially, he adopted the sport to improve his quickness and lateral movement but now he plays because of his love for the game. Recently, Berra, who has become quite proficient as a player, was asked by a friend to offer advice on some of the game's finer points.

"Well, you see, there's more to the game than just strength," instructed Dale. "In fact, I feel that 90 percent of the game is mental while the other part is physical." Shades of Yogi.

So common are such tales that the Pirate clubhouse often rocks when stories of Berra are told. But the zaniest story concerning racquetball happened off the court.

The story begins with Berra lounging in the lobby of a racquetball club when two streakers, with paper sacks covering their heads, ran by him. The incident so alarmed Berra that he immediately relayed the tale to the first friend he encountered. After listening to Berra's recount of the events the person asked, "Were the streakers men or women, Dale?"

The young Berra innocently replied without hesitation, "I don't know, they had bags over their faces."

All the Pirate racquetballers are power players, the only difference being that while Berra, Madlock, Foli and Garner are powering the ball into the corner for points, third-year catcher Steve Nicosia powers the ball into the floor.

Throughout his 25 years, Nicosia has been extremely versatile. For example, he was the North Miami Beach baseball MVP his senior year while also being named to the Florida All-state basketball squad. As a result, he was named the school's Athlete of the Year. But with all this athletic talent, Nicosia's racquetball talent has yet to surface following a three-month trial with his more experienced colleagues.

"He's terrible," says Madlock. "He's a disgrace to mankind on the racquetball court. You don't have to be a pro to defeat Nicosia. In fact, his wife is almost as good a player as he is."

Garner best illustrates Nicosia's poor style of play by giving him the title of the fruitless challenger while offering the following evidence: Oversized-underpriced racquet complete with price tag; high top tennis shoes; cut-off jean shorts; saggy shoulders sur-

rounded by a wornout sweaty body, and the famous words, "Have I scored yet?"

While Nicosia's rookie racquetballing attributes loom obvious, veteran Stargell has played the game for years. Stargell was taught to play by former teammate Oliver but has not played much recently, preferring to keep his mind on baseball.

Because of constant media attention after winning the National League's MVP in '79, Stargell shies away from publicity whenever possible. He believes that recurring injuries and demanding public appearances last season limited his contribution to the team.

In an attempt to save the Pirates' pennant chances, he underwent arthroscopic surgery on an arthritic knee last August. The knee did not respond to surgery as swiftly as anticipated and Stargell spent the remainder of the season on the disabled list. Since the operation, he has worked diligently to strengthen the knee and its surrounding muscles. He has also become more cautious regarding the injury and his body in general and thus has limited his brand of exercise.

"I haven't played any racquetball this off-season. There are corners on those courts you can twist your knee in. There are walls you could accidentally bang your knee against. I'm just trying to stay away from reinjuring my



Says one player of Tim Foli: "Preparing to play Foli in racquetball is like preparing to go to war."

knee and bring it along slowly," says Stargell, who just turned 40.

As the team sage, Stargell often philosophizes about the game he loves. "How stupid we are. Imagine this—trying to hit a round ball with a round stick squarely, and the ball coming at you 100 miles per hour. Boy, are we crazy. Who would want to reap such a little success with such a great rate of failure? Say a player hits .300. That's a great year but heck that still means he failed 70 percent of the times he's come to bat. There are very few players who have collected 3,000 hits in their careers and to do so most would have had to fail 7,000 times.

"If Doctor J. or Terry Bradshaw failed that often they'd be laughed at." He pauses. "But that's the beauty of the game."

Stargell believes baseball is also more difficult to master than other object-strike-ball sports, including racquetball.

"There are actions in baseball which cannot be practiced. If you are having trouble with your serve in racquetball, you go to a court and practice it. If your problem is your return, you have someone serve to you. But how can you practice hitting a Phil Niekro knuckleball or a Steve Carlton slider? There is no assimilation for either of these. That's the fine edge a true hitter must possess to make him a great hitter."

Stargell has often been quoted as saying that when his playing days are finished he'll know it and simply tip his hat to the crowd and depart. This could be his final season. He's not saying for sure. His enthusiasm for baseball still shows.

"I'm really looking forward to the upcoming season," says Stargell. And so are his teammates.



Yogi Berra's son, Dale, first took up the game at his dad's club in New Jersey.

THE COMEBACK KID

At age 24, Rich Wagner seems to be defeating his personal problems, and playing like he did two years ago.

By Rick Davis

It was just an isolated moment, one now all but forgotten in the course of an interview. But somehow it seemed to tell the story of Rich Wagner, professional racquetball player and young father.

To set the scene, a visitor had handed Wagner a copy of an article which noted how he was back on his game again, beating those guys he used to beat a couple of years ago before he hit that disastrous slide last year.

"Hey, look at this. All right, Wags," said Wagner. Of course, Wagner is aware that his career has rebounded, but seeing the evidence in living color served to emphasize the point.

Indeed, Rich Wagner is back. Comeback-of-the-year at the ripe old age of 24.

You see, a lot has happened to Wagner in the last 12 months.

He had plunged from one of the elite players on the pro tour to a tournament also-ran with personal problems that he says got the best of him. Now, nearing the end of the 1980-81 tour, Wagner once again is a consistent-hitting, hard-working force to be reckoned with. He is once again in the top 10.

As he will tell you, it has not been easy. It wasn't something you bury in the backcourt. Rather, it has taken extra effort—both mental and physical—on his part to overcome the problems. One was drinking and, although he believes self-therapy eventually would have brought it under control, Wagner instead committed himself to an alcoholic treatment center near Los Angeles. Another problem was missing two important tournaments near the end of the season after being injured in an auto accident. Throw in some financial, legal, and marital complications, plus the fact that Leach chose not to re-sign him to a sponsorship contract, and one can see how his game plan for life had soured.

He tends now to pooh-pooh the treatment center's results. "Of course, it's just what some people need, I'm sure," he says. "It's pretty severe. They give you drugs, then they pour all these drinks down you, all kinds of 'em... The combination of the two makes you real sick. It's the aversion treatment, like shocking the mouse. It makes you feel so

bad you never want to take another drink again. But it's not that simple. When you leave there, you have to make your own effort not to drink too much again."

Wagner still has a drink now and then, but he never overdoes it. "I go out and have a few beers, I can handle that," he says. "But I can't remember the last time I got drunk." Could he have kicked the drinking by himself? "I feel I could have," he answers. "The key to it all, I think, was getting away from the Leach situation."

Wagner at one time came out pretty heavily against Leach Industries and its vice president, Charlie Drake. But as the season has gone on, he has toned down his remarks considerably, saying only, "I disagree with a lot of things Leach does."

Leach sponsors many of the top touring pros, paying their traveling expenses plus providing additional revenue to some of them for their product promotion and endorsements.

Wagner, no doubt, would have welcomed a new Leach contract last year, but the company declined. "Marty Hogan has been the best-known of the pros, partly because he was ranked number one, and partly because Leach went all-out to promote him. The tour needed that to help our image but I don't think Leach realized the rest of us supported Leach, too. They always rationalized things. Everyone was supposed to be loyal to the team, regardless of how we were treated. I think it's created distrust between players and management on the NRC tour. There are other good players now who deserve the exposure, too."

Drake counters that a considerable sum was invested to promote Wagner during their five-year agreement. Not wishing to elaborate on details, Drake summarized that "Leach let the contract run out and didn't re-sign Rich. I'm glad to see him back up in the rankings," added Drake. "His career seems to indicate when things are at their worst, he tries harder."

"Three years ago, I thought Rich was the number-one contender to Marty. He had speed, execution, concentration, reflexes. It was raw, rookie talent, but he was awesome."

Wagner now pays his own expenses, which can amount to a sizable tab over the course of a season—enough to make a guy find a second job, which is what Wagner did.

He's a West Coast representative for Seamco, a company that manufactures racquetballs. "It's not a job where I get paid just for showing up. I have to go out and work, but I've made it a challenge," says Wagner.

His whole life situation was a challenge last year. To his credit, he measured up. The auto accident left him with a gashed lip which

healed after 50 stitches and plastic surgery. It's virtually unnoticeable.

Although divorced, he's back together with his ex-wife, Joan, and their three-year-old son, Richie. They rent a modestly priced home in San Diego, his home since leaving New Jersey in 1974. "I'm happy and comfortable with my situation now," says Wagner. "I don't think we should remarry. I'm not sure that's for me. Maybe it's because I got married so young (20). It just didn't work out. Maybe I'll change my mind later on, but not now. The only thing I'd really like for Joan, Rich and myself right now is a nicer house to live in."

Wagner also spends more time with his son now. "I really enjoy Richie now. I can't say that about his first year. It wasn't the diaper scene and all that. It's just that now I can talk to him. If something is the matter with him, we can talk about it. I like that. I think his mom preferred his first year. Boy, I don't understand that at all."

Another important thing to Wagner is his racquetball game. He has put his game back together, mentally and physically. Steadily improving through the first half of the season, he's once again one of the tour's quickest, runningest players.

In the first event of the season, at Westminster, Calif., he lost in the quarterfinal round to high-rated Mike Yellen. On stop number two in Omaha, he was left on the semifinal rung, losing to Yellen, 21-18, 21-13. Still he had climbed into a tie with Craig McCoy for eighth place in NRC rankings. Rich slipped a bit in the third tourney, losing in the second round to Lindsay Myers in a 21-17, 15-21, 7-11 tie-breaker. "That loss hurt the most. I wasn't planning on losing to Lindsay." On the fourth stop, in Memphis, Wagner again faced Yellen in the quarterfinals and again lost, this time 21-20, 21-15. That advancement, however, vaulted him to number six in the rankings. Then he moved into the number-five spot.

Obviously pleased, he cites several goals he set before the season started. "First, I wanted to get into the top 16, then the top eight. I've done both of these. The next goal is to be in the top four or at least be consistently in the semifinals in tournaments, which should put me in the top four anyway."

Had you asked his peers if such a turnaround was expected, even as a longshot, many would have thought there was no possible way. Says one tour official, "Rich is the only veteran who has made any kind of comeback. Of course, being as young as he is makes it easier to get your game back together."

Basically, Wagner's game is a running one (he wears high-topped shoes on the court, claiming, "I can't wear low-cuts, I run right out





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THE COMEBACK KID



Photos by David M. King

"When you leave there, you have to make your own effort not to drink again," says Wagner of his previous alcohol problems.

of them."). The intent is to counteract the style of whomever he's playing. Against the power of Marty Hogan, Wagner would try to take the pace off and move the ball around the court.

Against the control and finesse shots of Charlie Brumfield, Wagner likely would power the ball. "I feel I can switch from one style to the other," he says. Wagner considers the top four touring pros—Yellen, Hogan, Jerry Hilecher and Dave Peck—to be equally tough. "It really doesn't matter which of the four you play. They're in a class by themselves. That's why I want to get in the top four in the rankings. Then I wouldn't have to play anybody else in the top four until the semi-finals of a tournament."

Part of the credit for Wagner's turnaround also must go to his coach/counselor, Carl Loveday, a sharp-witted, graying gentleman whom Rich hooked up with a couple years ago. Loveday knows the racquet business, first picking up badminton in 1929 and eventually being named to the Helms Hall of Fame in the sport. He also plays table tennis, paddleball and racquetball, and frequently beats Rich in paddleball with the loser buying lunch.

"Rich is very coachable," says Loveday. "He's had to go through the transition of learning a completely different stroke from each side, backhand and forehand. He went from the push to the hit with his shots and it's actually made him more consistent because he doesn't have as long to think about a shot. He just hits it."

For that reason, Wagner prefers to sharpen his game between tournaments by playing doubles with other pros and good A players.

"I think doubles is the best game for getting up quick and reacting to where the ball is," he says. "It's always coming back at you, boom, boom, boom. All you have to do is react. You don't have time to set up for your shot. Sure, you have a smaller space to cover because you don't have to cover the whole court. But there's a lot more action directed at you in that small, isolated space. Doubles isn't as much of a workout as singles, but I think it's better for quickness and eye-hand coordination."

Wagner, with less than \$5,000 in tour earnings so far this season, is a long way from his combined income (including endorsements, etc.) of \$51,000 two years ago; or even the \$17,000 bankrolled the season before that. In contrast, he earned only \$2,000 his first season on the tour. That was back in 1974, when he sandwiched tournament stops in between his studies at the University of San Diego. He dropped out of USD in his fourth year, finally deciding the burden of student and tour player was too much.

"Sometimes I would be two whole weeks out of class because of racquetball," he remembers. Another factor may have been that he couldn't decide on a field of study, bouncing from physical education to pre-dentistry to business.

Fortunately for Rich Wagner he has bounced back to get his act together before reaching his prime, instead of after it. "I have a good feeling about this season," he says. "It's going better so far than any previous one. I should be able to go on from here and play several more years on the tour. I'm looking forward to that."



Do Your Thoughts Affect Your Game?

By Susan Smith Jones

Editor's note: The author has a Ph.D., is a fitness and health instructor at UCLA, and is on the advisory board for the International Academy of Holistic Health and Medicine and the National Joggers Association.

The fact that what you think and believe has a strong correlation with every aspect of your life is supported today by scientists, hypnotherapists, metaphysicians and others involved in the healing fields. But what does this have to do with your racquetball game? Perhaps quite a bit. In order to understand this correlation, it is necessary to first take a closer look at our awareness of thoughts.

Medical literature points to the fact that we all have a conscious and subconscious mind, which are responsible for our actions. The conscious mind is the one utilized when you analyze, reason, and make decisions in life. But this is not done independently of your subconscious mind. You are the sum total of all your experiences from the time of birth up until right now. Your subconscious has been the storage house for all of your programming. This subconscious part of your mind has been directing your every moment, sometimes in opposition to your conscious desires.

This contradictory action occurs because the subconscious has little or no reasoning power. It simply operates like a computer and functions as the result of programming. It helps bring into actuality the reality for which

it is programmed. Operating like a computer, the subconscious is constantly being fed new programming or data with every thought. Thus you create your own reality with your thoughts and this reality can either be positive or negative, depending on what you are thinking.

So many people are not even aware of how negative they are everyday. Take a typical day. When you wake up, are you excited about the new day or do your thoughts center around the discordant alarm—no time for breakfast, too much traffic on the way to work, unhappiness with your job, unsatisfied with your racquetball game? These thoughts go on and on with you during the day and they affect your subsequent actions.

According to the National Science Foundation, a person thinks thousands of thoughts everyday—about 1,000 an hour. A writer thinks about 2,500 thoughts in about 90 minutes. The ordinary human thinks about 12,000 thoughts a day. A deeper thinker, according to this report, puts forth about 50,000. Imagine if 50 percent of your thoughts were positive. For many of you, that's still 25,000 negative thoughts you might be programming everyday.

Keep in mind that although the subconscious programs us, it doesn't reason. It works to create reality according to the programming it has been fed. Although this is normally accomplished by thoughts and through life experiences, brain researchers have found that the subconscious is incap-

able of telling the difference between reality and fantasy... between the real experience and the imagined experience.

Reality/Fantasy Tests

Two people who have done extensive work in the fields of hypnosis, human potential and psychic/reincarnation are Dick and Trena Sutphen. In tests, the Sutphens have proved the validity of the unreasoning subconscious. Test subjects were placed in a room and wired up to an EEG machine in order to record actual brain wave patterns under specific conditions. In this experiment, someone would run into a room and fire a gun. Someone else would dance, a dog would bark, a color would be projected, and so on. As the test subject was exposed to each situation, it caused his or her brain waves to form patterns on the recording instruments. With each situation, a mark was noted on the recording paper to ascertain which activity had transpired to create each pattern.

Following the reality part of the test, the subjects were asked to sit and concentrate upon the situations described by the researchers. As an example, "I now want you to imagine someone running into the room and firing a gun; hear it, see it and imagine it happening right in front of you." At the same time the subject was vividly imagining and recreating each act, his or her brain waves would once again be recorded. The results of the tests showed that the same patterns of up and down brain waves were created when the woman came into the room and did a dance or the gun was shot or the dog barked as when the subject imagined these. Thus, the brain waves were identical. The computer part of the brain was obviously incapable of telling the real from the imagined.

Relating this to sports, one can look at the results of a test done at the University of Chicago. The subjects were divided into three groups who took part in an experiment based upon shooting basketball. At the beginning, all the participating students were tested as to their individual basket shooting ability and the results were recorded. Then Group One was told, "Don't play any basketball for a month. In fact, just forget about basketball for the entire month." Group Two was told, "You are each to practice shooting baskets for one full hour a day, everyday for a month." Group Three was told, "You are to spend one hour a day imagining you are successfully shooting baskets. Do this everyday for a month. Imagine or fantasize yourself being successful shooting baskets. See every detail of your accomplishments in your mind."

At the end of one month, the three groups were again tested as to their ability to shoot baskets. Group One, which hadn't played basketball for a month, tested exactly the same as they did the first time. Group Two, which had been practicing an hour a day for a full month, improved 24 percent in their basket shooting ability. Group Three, which had only imagined that they were successfully shooting baskets for an hour a day, improved 23 percent in their actual basket shooting ability, only one percent point less than the



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Thoughts

group that had actually been practicing.

In short, the subconscious can be fooled and programmed to procure the results you desire.

Let's look directly at racquetball. In terms of practicing and playing, do you feel that you have been positive or negative in your approach to your game? Are you 100 percent satisfied with your game at this time? Where could you use improvement? Are you constantly putting yourself down when you play because of the inexcusable errors that you make? Are you always comparing yourself to your partner(s) when playing? Do you get uptight when you are practicing with your partner before a game and you see how strong his/her backhand is? If you can identify with any of these questions, perhaps some positive racquetball programming is what you need.

Certainly, the thoughts you have during a game will affect how you play, but much of the work that will bring about those desired results takes place before you get on the court. A couple of times a day (morning and evening are good) practice some mental moves. Be as specific and precise as you can. For example, if you have a regular partner or if you know who your partner will be the following day, use that person in your movie. See both of you in a game situation and cover all points that relate to the sport. Envision yourself stretching before the match,

feeling strong, confident and relaxed. Perhaps then you'll see yourself practicing with your partner without feeling uptight or threatened by comparisons. You may even get to the point of seeing yourself mess up on some shots without getting down on yourself and letting it affect the rest of your game. Let the movie include perfect placement of shots, excellent serving, and superb strategy. In actuality, let your movie cover all aspects of your game just as you desire it to be, with perfect success.

This type of programming does not take the place of the practice time required in learning a new skill if you are a beginner, but has remarkable advantages in helping those who need the edge or extra push required to improve your game. Not only will this type of programming improve your game, but it will also add a certain ingredient that is needed to enjoy the sport.

There is even more than can be done, besides making your own mental movies, that will be of benefit to you. Affirmations of what you want to accomplish or the reality you want to create for yourself can be supplemented. For example, along with the mental movies, or separately during the day, affirm to yourself a statement that will bring about positive results in your game. These affirmations will be as different as there are players. For example, if your backhand has been weak and unresponsive lately, you may want to affirm something like, "My backhand is strong. I can place the ball just where I want." "I am strong, confident, energetic and an

excellent racquetball player." There are so many affirmations you can use that are specifically geared to your needs. Keep in mind that these affirmations and mental movies always need to be in the positive, present, and successful state. It is then that the subconscious will imprint what you have said or envisioned and put it to work. If you are stating things silently in the future tense, they will not become a reality.

The best results come to those who utilize this type of programming on a regular basis, at least once a day, and the best time to practice either the movies or verbal affirmations is when your body is in a relaxed state. You should spend a few minutes deep breathing, very slowly. Put yourself into a composed state before you start the movies or positive statements. A state of deep relaxation is more conducive to self-programming.

This type of deep breathing is also excellent for stretching before a match. Stretch, breathe deeply, affirm and see your match played just the way you would like it to be.

Torney Smith, a U.C.L.A. student, is one who is impressed with the results of his programming. "I found my shots gradually became more consistent, my attitude was more positive and my game was more relaxed," he says. "Sure, it's not perfect, and who knows how much of this improvement was due to my slump coming to an end. But I was impressed with my quick improvement. In fact, because of these favorable results from racquetball, I am now using these techniques in other areas of my life."



NUTRITION AND VITAMINS

By Ray Mentzer

Editor's note: The author is a health and fitness consultant and a former Mr. America bodybuilding champion.

A balanced diet should be an important part of your racquetball training. If you change your nutritional or training plan in mid-stream, the results can be devastating. Therefore, you should have an eating plan prior to tournament competition.

About 48 hours prior to a tournament, you should dramatically decrease your physical training. You should be relaxing, getting mentally, not physically psyched. Decreasing physical output is essential to eliminate various wastes and metabolites that might reduce performance. Therefore, your diet is especially crucial during these last two days because you will need carbohydrates for energy.

Glycogen must be stored in the muscle tissue and this takes approximately 1,500 calories. You should also limit protein and fat consumption during this period, since protein and fat slow down the digestion of carbohydrates and produce by-products—acids—which inhibit performance. Most proteins and fats are "heavy" foods which will lie in your intestinal tract and cause sluggishness, the last thing you want before an important tournament.

The key question that arises regarding carbohydrate eating is what kinds of sugar products should be eaten. Carbohydrates or sugars are vital elements in the production of muscle contraction. A staff of physiologists for *Runners World* magazine reported that long distance runners performed best on highly refined sugars before their events. Since balance and moderation are recommended, refined carbohydrates will not be detrimental if consumed in a rational manner. In other words, don't "pig out," especially not on carbohydrate foods which are high in the cellulose and fiber that cause gastric upset. One should consume carbohydrates that are rapidly absorbed.

A basic 48-hour pre-event eating list:

1. Toast with jelly or honey on the day of the tournament.
2. Juices are rapidly absorbed and should

be consumed in moderation before and during the tournament. Do not guzzle such sweet drinks, as they may cause nausea.

3. Sugar or honey in your tea or coffee.
4. If you feel you must eat protein, try fish or other such easily digestible protein.
5. Lowfat yogurt with preserves on the bottom.
6. Moderate amounts of fruit like bananas. Date confections and raisins are loaded with carbohydrates.

Carbohydrates retain water, so you eat them in moderation at periodic intervals during the last two days. However, the "little" bit of water you will hold will help prevent dehydration, so it is not necessary to drink a lot of juice during the event, only a moderate amount.

The validity of carbohydrate loading is open to question since there is no definite physiological evidence of the energy boost received. The apparent lift felt after loading on carbs could be psychological. However, it could also cause a rise in blood pressure because extreme carbohydrate loading will cause your body to hold huge amounts of water, disrupting your electrolytic balance and that could cause slower reaction time.

You have to be a rational technician in practicing proper dietary habits. One suggestion is to experiment with different carbohydrate foods and calories before a big tournament. Keep a record of your experimentation in a journal and you will be able to find the best way to individually prepare yourself.

VITAMINS

Vita means life and *amin* refers to the important chemicals vital to life. Vitamins play an important role in our body's metabolism, and must be obtained through outside sources. The sources of most vitamins are organic food substances existing only in living plants and animals. Vitamins are not foods in the sense of carbohydrates, fats and proteins; they are not needed in bulk to build counterparts, but retain their original form and are synthesized in the body structure to assist the cell in development. For proper utilization and digestion of foods, the synergistic qualities of vitamins are essential for health.

According to some nutritionists, athletes are an elite group of humans whose super

endeavors require more of everything—food, vitamins, drugs, etc. However, as exercise physiologists have shown, athletes who are in condition are able to utilize nutrients more efficiently, thus putting less strain on the body to break down more food stuffs and supplements. It has also been proven that vitamin supplements do not enhance athletic performance.

But there are many variables that must be taken into consideration. Whether you are a racquetball pro or a novice player, your total life style determines where you stand in your class. Poor nutrition and a lazy attitude not only limits you in racquetball, but in all other areas of your life.

Here are some vitamin and nutrition tips!

1. Maintain a balanced diet consisting of protein, fats and carbohydrates. Eliminate junk food as much as possible. Cut alcohol consumption.
2. Mental tranquility and sleep are important for the proper assimilation of food stuffs and recuperation of the body.
3. Training and conditioning are the most important qualities for winning tournaments. You must practice your racquetball shots as well as condition your aerobic and anaerobic abilities. A wide range of training would include running, cycling, and swimming along with resistance training such as circuit equipment and barbells. All of these work together as essential components for top performance.
4. I recommend that one use vitamins moderately. Never use mega-doses. This can disrupt the fine balance in your body. Use vitamins when you are under severe stress and are on a deficiency diet. One problem with vitamin supplements is that they are hard to digest and the utilization of supplements is not very good. It is better to use a chelated, time-release formula which allows more assimilation.

5. But there are cautions. The placebo effect of vitamins is extremely prevalent. People's feelings are affected by the vitamins they take. Vitamins can cause a drug-like psychological dependence.

Moderation and balance in your life, mentally, physically and spiritually work synergistically for living. In other words, you need a balance of all for a healthy life as they interact and complement one another.

COLLEGE COURTS

University of Maryland



Expansion is the key word for racquetball on the University of Maryland campus in College Park. As Nick Kovalakides, director of intramural sports, comments, "We're bursting at the seams now." The college is currently expanding from 10 to 14 courts and has extended its court time an hour each day during the week and four hours on Sundays to accommodate the huge crowds.

In fact, court time is at such a premium that reservations must be booked a full seven days in advance. Kovalakides explains, "We have a pretty sophisticated reservation system. We found that people like to know when they're going to be able to play. It gives them a chance to plan ahead. All of the courts are booked within a half an hour to 45 minutes of reservation taking. And, of course, if they're going to cancel, we expect them to cancel. If there's no-shows, they can lose their privileges. That way, it's very rare that a court goes unused."

Of the 10 courts currently in the Physical Education Recreation and Health building, one is a demonstration court with a right glass wall and rear observation wall. Two of the other courts are challenge courts. Kovalakides comments that while the challenge courts are an opportunity for people who don't get reservations to play, "it has pretty

much become a sophisticated caliber of play because the winners that stay on are pretty good players." The four new courts, which will be finished by the end of this semester, will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Racquetball for the 2,000 to 3,000 students and faculty is conducted on a slightly different format than most schools. Players are grouped by their various associations, thus there are players in an open league, a dormitory league, a fraternity league, a women's undergraduate league and a grad/faculty league. Winners at the last annual tournament were:

Men's Open - Rocky Gutin def. Mike Myers, 11-15, 15-5, 15-14.

Men's Dorm - Ken Leahy (Cumberland G. Hall) def. Brett O'Donnell (Annapolis Hall), 15-11, 15-8.

Men's Frat - Lou Klotzman (Tau Epsilon Phi) def. Drew Harbeson (Theta Chi), 15-7, 15-6.

Women's Undergrads - Jane Prieve (Kappa Delta) def. Sharon Loube (Hagerstown CD Hall), 15-0, 6-15, 15-8.

Instead of trophies, winners of intramural racquetball tournaments are awarded with a traditional medal that's stamped "Intramural Champion, Maryland Intramurals" and is in the shape of the school's mascot, a terrapin

turtle. Kovalakides says, "There's a lot of sentimental value to winning one. Some students put them on chains around their neck, on charm bracelets, give them to their girlfriends and boyfriends."

And for those gold medalists who like to advertise their win, there's also a white T-shirt that boldly states "University of Maryland Intramural Champion."

Notre Dame

"Racquetball is a sport that's still growing here at Notre Dame," says Tom Kelley, director of intramural sports.

"While it's popular as an individual sport as opposed to a team sport, it's still not as big here as it is in the East."

Approximately a third of the 8,700 students play the sport on the campus' 16 courts, half of which are housed in the Athletic and Convocation Center and the other half located in the physical education building.

Since Notre Dame (South Bend, Ind.) is predominately a resident college, the majority of the intramural sports are geared for those students. Tackle football is a favorite intramural sport which draws well over 400 participants. Soccer also ranks high with 350 teams, followed by softball with 150 teams.

There are no racquetball clubs on campus, so the game is restricted to intramural play on five levels: Men's undergrad singles, women's undergrad singles, men's grad singles, doubles and mixed doubles. Winners in the last tourney were:

Men's Undergrad Singles - Frank Guilford def. Don Shank.

Women's Undergrad Singles - Martha Gallagher def. Florence Bankiotes.

Men's Grad Singles - Antonio Manual def. Jay Lavinger.

Kelley foresees no plans to play other schools in the near future. He says that a campus club will have to be established before that happens. "And it's still a long way off yet before a club is established," he says.

University of Tennessee

The competition at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville is fast and furious before the players even hit the courts. Winners in this game are determined by who has the fastest trigger fingers. Harold Denton, director of intramural sports explains, "We've got 30,000 people on campus. They're able to reserve a court on a next-day basis. There are only 12 courts and 2,000 to 3,000 active players.

TOURNAMENTS

Those 100 spaces are reserved within 15 to 20 minutes. Racquetball is definitely at a premium."

Racquetball has steadily increased in popularity since it was first introduced on campus 10 years ago when the physical education building was built. Denton says its growth on campus has closely paralleled racquetball's development nationally. "Since about eight years ago, racquetball has been going absolutely nuts. In fact, we can use another 10 courts and we still won't have sufficient space for our people." Although the student demand may be there, there are no current plans to increase the number of courts because of limited funds.

"The racquetball that is here," says Denton, is "going on a half a dozen different ways. Intramurally, we run racquetball in two particular fashions. One, an elimination open tournament every quarter in which advanced, intermediate and beginning players are paired up. Anywhere from 65 to 100 players participate in the quarterly tournaments. We also run racquetball as a team event somewhat like a high school would run a tennis tournament. There are 95 to 100 teams with two to four members per team."

Winners in the last tournament were:

Fall Men's Singles A - Steve Dzychinski def. Jeff Chandler

Doubles A - Tim Rogers (a faculty member) and Jeff Bowles def. Tim Becker and Larry Cooke

Summer Men's Singles A - Joe Laird def. Donny Heitman

Doubles A - Donny Heitman and Steve Silver def. Rick Holtz and Roy Dedmon.

There's also a recreational racquetball club on campus headed by faculty advisor Emil Catagini. Although the club hasn't played any other schools recently, it's tentatively planning to host the next state intercollegiate championships, which it won five years ago. The school the University of Tennessee will be gearing up to beat is Memphis State, which has held the national championship title the past few years.

Dues for the five-year-old club run \$5 a quarter and membership is held down to 40 because, as Catagini explains, court time is limited. "Because of the increasing popularity of racquetball, we have more people wanting to be in our club, but we hold the membership down to 40 because of the limited court time."

The most celebrated racquetball alumnus is former national pro champ Davey Bledsoe, who is still ranked nationally.



Photo by Nancy Makans

Lynn Adams is about to take a shot off the back wall in finals of WPRA Chicago event against Heather McKay. McKay won.

WPRA

Heather McKay defeated ever-improving Lynn Adams, 2-3, 3-1, 2-0, in the \$10,000 WPRA St. Valentine's Day Massacre put on by Prime Time Promotions at Killshot, Ltd. in Bloomingdale, Ill.

The victory was worth \$2,500 to McKay. Adams, clearly the number-three player on the tour behind McKay and Shannon Wright, collected a check for \$1,200.

The usual McKay-Wright rivalry for pro racquetball supremacy in the women's ranks took a weekend off when Wright chose to skip the tourney in favor of the Women's Superstars competition which ABC was taping in Florida.

But Adams gave McKay and everybody else all they could handle, and placed herself in contention for a future Nationals title.

Using a two-out-of-three games (11 points, must have a two-point advantage, server or

receiver can score), two-out-of-three set system, Adams did not lose a single game until the semifinals. But her skill ran its course in the finals and she seemed to lose concentration in her match against McKay.

Adams won the first game 14-12 but McKay came back to win the next two, 11-8, 11-8. Adams then won the next two by 11-8 scores to take the first set.

Adams won the initial game of the second set, 11-8, but McKay came back to take the next three, 11-6, 11-5, 11-6. The two had been playing with a slower ball throughout the first set and part of the second, and when a newer, faster ball was put in play after the first one broke, McKay seemed to adjust to it faster.

"She was on a hot streak in the first game," said McKay. "I just had to hope she would start missing."

McKay, who made a lot of unforced errors in

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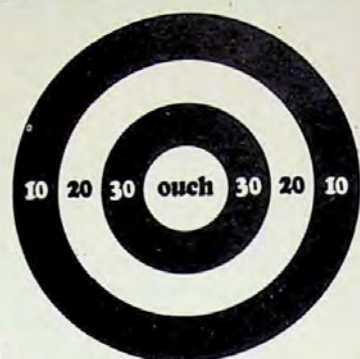
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TOURNAMENTS

the first set, started moving Adams around the court in the second set and Adams seemed to lose her spark in the third set.

"I was getting tired in the third set," said Adams. "But I'm not complaining. I played real well the whole week. My head was in the right frame of mind."

McKay had little problem in the third set, easily winning, 11-7, 11-8.

Adams earned a berth in the finals with a 3-2 victory over Marci Greer and McKay gave Laura Martino a lesson, 3-0, 3-0. Martino reached the semis with upset wins over Bonnie Stoll, 3-2, 3-1, in the second round, and Karin Walton-Trent, 1-3, 3-0, 2-0, in the quarters.

In other quarterfinal matches, McKay defeated Elaine Lee, 3-1, 3-0, Adams topped Peggy Gardner, 3-0, 3-0, and Greer defeated Linda Prefontaine, 3-1, 3-0.

Ektelon-Perrier

Jeff Kwartler defeated Tommy Gautren, 21-4, 20-21, 11-3, and Gail Woods defeated Liz Alvarado, 21-16, 15-21, 11-4, to win the Houston regional of the Ektelon-Perrier tournament at the Continental Racquetball Club.

Kwartler and Alvarado and the senior winners, Jeff Schwartz and Renee Herbert, will be flown to Los Angeles for the Ektelon-Perrier Finals in late April.

Kwartler teamed with Mark Malowitz and Alvarado teamed with Brenda Young to capture the doubles titles. Brad Guidry and Michelle Cordrey won the B divisions.

In the Philadelphia regional at the Omni Sports Club, Ira Miller of Baltimore defeated Dave Mackelcan, 21-19, 19-21, 11-8 and Lucy Zarfos topped Cindy Baxter, 21-6, 20-21, 11-5, in the open divisions.

Craig Guinter and Mary Rasmussen won the senior divisions, Mike Curewitz and Adrien Paston won the B divisions and Molly O'Brien teamed with Lynn Kennedy and Russ Mantague teamed with Jim Young for the doubles title trophies.

Ruben Gonzales defeated Jim Cascio, 21-8, 21-12 and Cindy Baxter topped Molly O'Brien, 13-21, 21-11, 11-0, to take the open division titles of the New York regional at Centerville Court in Rockville Centre.

Conrad Schmidt and Carol Andreasen won the senior divisions and Craig Schoenhaus and Randi Friedman won the B titles.

Ed Andrews won the Southern California regional at Racquetball World in Santa Ana, Calif. with a 21-14, 21-13 decision over Leo Gurnoe. Cindy More won the women's open by defeating Dee Gossick, 21-16, 21-19.

R.O. Carson and Linda Siau won the seniors, Andrea Sprecher (two months pregnant) and Steve Jenkins took the B titles and Gary Lusk teamed with Fernando Galarza to win the men's doubles.

Winter Rollout

Laura Martino defeated Kippi Bishop-Boatwright, 21-16, 21-19, to win the Winter Rollout put on by Creative Tournaments at California Way in Pasadena, Calif.

To reach the finals, Martino defeated Terry Gilreath, 21-18, 21-15, and Bishop-Boatwright beat Cindy Moore, 21-9, 21-17.

Steve Lerner won the men's title with a 21-8, 12-21, 11-10 decision over John Mack. Lerner defeated Billy Stevens, 11-5 in the tie-breaker, and Mack topped Dan Massari, 21-15, 21-17, in the semis.

Each of the winners picked up a check for \$150.

Massari and Mack teamed to win the men's doubles by defeating Leo Gurnoe and Stevens, 21-17, 21-5. Mark and Laura Martino won the mixed doubles by defeating Bishop-Boatwright and Greg Sheffield, 21-13, 21-12.

Vince Iannolo and Cindy Donnelly won the B divisions and the senior winners were Sam Sutherland and Joy Desantis. Bruce Radford won the men's veterans competition and Donn Gartrell took the top honors in the masters bracket.

Etc.

● Karin Walton-Trent defeated Bonnie Stoll, 12-21, 21-19, 11-10, to win the \$1,000 first prize in the women's pro division of the Miller Lite Southeast Open at the Racquetball Club of Kenosha (Wisc.) Dale Brandes defeated Wil Mulvaney, 15-21, 21-11, 11-3, to win the men's open and Margie Fish topped Regina Parks, 17-21, 21-18, 11-6, in the women's open. B division winners were Mark Hackbarth and Beth Haebig. Daryl Greenmeier took the seniors competition.

● Ric Dern defeated Dave Negrete, 21-11, 21-19, to win the men's open division of Vittet's Super Bowl II put on by Prime Time Promotions at Killshot, Ltd. in Bloomingdale, Ill. Stacey Fletcher defeated Colleen Shields, 21-7, 21-7, to win the women's open. Jim Thompson and Duana Hardek were the A division winners. Jim Jerrers took the B division and Herb Grigg won the men's seniors.

● Angel Sandoval defeated David Brooks, 21-11, 21-14, to win the Okinawa Marine Racquetball Championships.

● Guy Texiera defeated John Mack, 19-21, 21-16, 11-1 and Cindy Moore defeated M. Drexler, 21-15, 21-3, to win the open divisions of the President's Tourney at the Hacienda Health Club in Hacienda Heights, Calif. The event was put on by Creative Tournaments.

● J. Mack defeated B. Stevens, 19-21, 21-19, 11-1 and Kippi Bishop-Boatwright defeated Laura Martino, 21-17, 21-14, to win Creative Tournaments' Winter Classic at the Newport Beach (Calif.) Sporting House. Each of the winners took home \$100.



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Front row: Ektelon, canvas duck cloth bag, \$24.95; Racquetball, Etc. (Salt Lake City, Utah), cordura nylon bag, \$23; Omega, vinyl bag, \$17. Back row: Patrick, three-ply nylon bag, \$19.95; Camaby (Los Angeles, Calif.), vinyl bag, \$32.50; Wilson, vinyl bag, \$19.



Front row: Leisure Sports (Los Angeles, Calif.), polyurethane vinyl bag, \$23.99; Pat Gaines Originals (Canoga Park, Calif.), polyester/cotton quilted patchwork bag, \$27. AMF Voit, parapak nylon bag, \$21. Back row: Vittert, imitation suede bag, \$18.95; Pony, blown polyurethane, \$16; Pride of California (Monrovia, Calif.), vinyl bag, \$22.95.

With summer almost upon us and travel plans in the making, RACQUETBALL ILLUSTRATED presents its first Travel Bag Section.

The bags are available from department stores, pro shops and sporting goods stores. If your store does not carry any of these, ask them to order one from the sponsoring company.



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Photography by David M. King

CLUB NEWS

Century West Club, Century City, Calif.



In today's modern world where "more means better" and success is measured by quantity rather than quality and services have been cut to a bare-bones minimum, the Century West Club in Los Angeles sets itself aside from what general manager Joe Hirsch calls the high volume McDonald's type racquetball club.

Hirsch explains the difference between the big chain establishment and his own exclusive club. "It's like restaurants. You have restaurants like McDonald's that do a hell of a volume. And then you have a place such as Jason's. They're very expensive because of their status, the

food and they're specialists in extreme service.

"In our club, we have 41 employees and half of them are doing nothing but cleaning—that's an important part. Those volume clubs neglect that because they're doing so much business and they have so many people that there's no opportunity to clean things the way they should. With us, we have a crew on all night and when people come in at 6 a.m., the place is sparkling. That is the big secret. There's just enough people that want something exclusive. And that's what we have."

Besides the pristine cleanliness and personalized attention, including porter and valet services, members of Century West Club are offered racquetball on six courts, a totally equipped health gym, running track, sauna and rock steam baths, whirlpool, Swedish ice plunge, sunlamps for California tans, massages, a barbershop, facial and beauty facilities and, for less vigorous activities, a quiet room, an inhalation room, billiards, TV and backgammon. And, of course, once you've burned up all that energy on the racquetball court, you can refuel in the dining room or at the health food bar.

As can be expected, the membership fee runs a bit higher than the neighborhood YMCA. Males pay a \$450 initiation fee plus \$45 monthly dues and females pay \$200 for initiation and \$36 per

month.

Century West Club caters to the predominately professional people who work and/or live in posh Century City where parking fees alone run higher than court costs for lesser clubs. (Incidentally, parking for members of CWC is included gratis with membership.) Celebrities such as academy award winner George C. Scott, James Farentino, Norman Fell and comedian David Steinberg play on courts adjacent to doctors, lawyers, writers and CPAs. There are a total of 1,300 members, roughly 50 percent female, and, according to Hirsch, the membership was built entirely by word of mouth, without any advertising.

The club holds two in-house singles tournaments a year and a celebrates apres game at the Plaza Four restaurant. Winners of the last men's tournament were:

- A** - Dan Forsyth
- B** - David Dworsky
- C** - Bruce Jaffe
- Seniors** - Elliot Dworsky

Asked if he had any plans for future expansion, general manager Hirsch emphatically replied in the negative. After 50 years in the health club business, 15 of them owning clubs, Hirsch found the formula for success eight years ago with the right sport, racquetball, the right place, Century City, and the right product, high quality personalized service

The Sportroom of Sabal Chase Miami, Fla.

Heavy traffic and enthusiastic players make for long hours at The Sportroom of Sabal Chase Racquetball Club in Miami, Fla.

While most clubs have prime time for a brief three hours, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., The Sportroom is busy from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., and then the rush is on again from 3 to 11 p.m. The club is open 365 days a year from 7 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Wednesday, then extends its hours to 3 a.m. Thursday through Saturday to accommodate late night weekenders who'd rather sweat it out on a racquetball court instead of in Miami's singles bars.

The Sportroom of Sabal Chase is part of the six-club Racquetball International corporation which also includes The Sportrooms of Coral Gables, Plantation, Hialeah, North Miami and Ft. Lauderdale.

One of the reasons for the popularity of the Sabal Chase facility is its Celebrity Night, which features some of Miami's famous athletes battling it out on racquetball courts. Prominent sports

figures who attended the last Celebrity Night were Tim Folley (defensive back for the Miami Dolphins), Wayne Moore (offensive tackle for the Dolphins), Joey Cornblit (jai alai player), Chuck Dowdle (sports caster), Les Peterson (defense for the Ft. Lauderdale Strikers soccer team) and Ian Martin (mid-fielder for the Strikers). Opponents are chosen by the sophisticated up-for-grabs method, with games played to five. The fast-paced games are followed by an autograph signing party with live entertainment.

Another annual event which draws crowds is the Mr. Sportroom contest for body builders. Carter Burrus holds the title of Mr. Sportroom of 1980.

For the regular racquetball players, there's the Mixed Doubles night, which handicaps the male players by making them play with their opposite hand.

The Sportroom of Sabal Chase, which has been open for three years, features 14 courts, separate men's and women's Nautilus facilities, steam bath and sauna.

One program that manager Tracy Watkins is especially proud of is the intramural program. Four high schools, Miami

Killian, Sunset, Southridge and Palmetto, each with a team of approximately 25 students, participate in interschool games. The program has been operable for two years and has developed some top junior players, notably the AARA national junior champion Sergio Gonzalez, Jr. of Miami Southridge High and Bubba Gautier and Mark Barret of Sunset High.

The Sportroom hosts three in-house tournaments a year in doubles and singles. Winners of the last tournament were:

- Men's A** - Robert Mendez (the club pro)
- Men's B** - Ben Upton
- Men's C** - Cameron Brown
- Men's Novice** - Lenny Roberts
- Women's A** - Cathy Feders
- Women's B** - Susan Schwartz
- Women's C** - Suzanne Golub
- Women's Novice** - Shelley Jacoby

The club offers individual lessons by Mendez, a juniors program, a free clinic which covers everything from basic rules to backhand tips and a guaranteed program which promises students that they'll

learn racquetball or receive a refund of the \$40 fee.

With racquetball still on the upswing in Miami, the only problem that manager Watkins foresees is the possible overproduction of racquetball clubs in South Florida. She says, "I believe there are 15 racquetball clubs between West Palm Beach and Miami. I just hope that we don't get overrun like Chicago . . . or California for that matter."

Sunshine Racquetball Club Springfield, Mo.

Even though the Sunshine Racquetball Club is one of only two racquetball clubs in Springfield, because the town is so into softball and fishing, the club has had to develop extra amenities to keep members coming through the doors during the slow summer months. That's why the Sunshine club has free babysitting for members, a Ladies' Day every Tuesday and Men's Day every Thursday when court time is discounted, one free guest per member every other weekend, free swimming privileges in the club pool, and trade discounts where members who show a Sunshine card get \$1 off at the Springfield Car Wash and a free pitcher of coke at Godfather's Pizza.

With extras such as these, the club has been able to build its membership to a strong 2,000. In fact, business has been so good that the club is expanding from eight to 14 courts and is adding a full lounge/restaurant for 150 to 200 people and additional locker rooms.

The typical member is the 25- to 30-year-old social player who participates primarily for the health benefits and the fun of the sport. The really hardcore players wander down the street to the competitive club.

Located in the southeast corner of Springfield and only a mile away from its competitor, memberships to the Sunshine Club run \$80 per family and \$55 for singles. For this, members can soak in the whirlpool, bake in the sauna, exercise on the Universal gym equipment or in the aerobic dance classes, shop at the fully stocked pro shop, play on the one squash court and get a discount membership to the tennis club next door.

The club has men's and women's leagues at advanced and intermediate levels where play is conducted on a round robin basis with groups of eight to 10 people playing together for eight or nine weeks.

Another feature of the Sunshine Club is that its facilities can be rented out for private parties. Closed parties which take

over the entire club run approximately \$200 for a three-hour period, while rental of the courts only runs about \$150.

Various church groups have made party racquetball such a popular pastime that the club is usually rented out at least once every other weekend.

The club hosts three or four major tournaments a year, including Coors and Miller Lite tournaments. The 100 to 150 participants in the three-day tournaments are guaranteed two matches so that even if a player loses his first match, he can go on to a second round playing other losers for the consolation trophy. Winners of the last Miller Lite tournament were:

Men's A - Neil Stenger

Men's B - Roger Eggen

Men's C - Tom Ruff

Men's D - Reza Pezechpour

Women's B - Cindy Morrison

Women's C - Jeanie Huckstep

Women's D - Lesia Lugge

"Racquetball will continue its growth pattern here in Springfield for at least another two or three years before it hits its peak," says club pro Joe Martin.

Yogi Berra's Hall of Fame Club Fairfield, N.J.

The typical player at the Yogi Berra Hall of Fame Racquetball Club in Fairfield, N.J. shatters the myth that racquetball is a game exclusively for upwardly mobile professionals.

The club's 4,000 mostly middle class members prove that racquetball is every man's (and every woman's) game. Manager, former Baltimore Colt football player Tim Berra says, "The typical member of our club is primarily the blue collar person that really hasn't had a planned or physical fitness attitude."

Why does racquetball appeal to the average Joe? Berra responds, "He's finding something now that he can play and he's enjoying it. He's not having to worry about playing something like tennis where he doesn't really get the great work-out and finds it difficult to play. He's going out there and he's enjoying it."

Perhaps another reason for the club's popularity is that millions of New York Yankee fans still identify strongly with the club's namesake, baseball hero Yogi Berra, who is part-owner of the club. The senior Berra, who was elected to Baseball's Hall of Fame in 1972, plays a weekly game of racquetball at the club to stay fit. To advertise Yogi's association with the club, a full-size portrait of him is displayed in front of the building.

Tim, Yogi's son, used to be an avid racquetballer but has found that the

pressing needs of business limit his playing time. "I play pretty well. I'm an A player. I competed in a couple of Jersey tournaments last year and made it to the quarterfinals, but I've been so busy with the club this year that I find it hard to find the time to play," says Tim.

The facility, which Berra describes as "a basic racquetball club," offers 17 racquetball courts and one squash court, a full exercise room with 12 stations of Universal equipment, men's and women's steam rooms, saunas, whirlpool, aerobic dance and exercise classes. Club pros John Bierman and Pam Perrott conduct clinics, private and semi-private lessons. Memberships to the club run \$40 a year with court time going at \$12 per hour during prime time and \$6 an hour during the off-peak.

The club, which has three competitive facilities within a 15 minute drive, has a 30,000-square-foot layout. Berra says, "I like the layout of our club. What separates us from most clubs is the type of building we have. It's very big, wide open and spacious. It's got a very large upstairs lobby and a very large downstairs lobby, and our locker rooms are enormous—probably three or four times the size of other clubs. We have plenty of room. That's what members like most about our club. That and our friendly staff."

As can be expected, a number of sports figures support the club, including Willie Randolph, Fred Stanley and Bucky Dent of the baseball Yankees and Terry Jackson and Ray Rhodes of the football Giants.

Although there are no open tournaments, the club hosts two in-house tournaments a year. Winners of the last event were:

Men's A - Sal Teodoro

Men's B - Dave Ralston

Men's C - Rich Ryan

Men's Novice - Dennis Majtenyi

Men's Doubles - Brian Kleinman and Stew Freeman

Women's A - Carol Capasso

Juniors A - Chris Cirillo

Juniors B - Chris Sautz

Asked about the current status of racquetball in the East where the game had its birth, Berra says, "In New Jersey, it's heavily saturated. I feel that it has reached its saturation point, but everytime I say that, it seems that somebody else is starting another club. I still think there are a lot of people that have not played or tried racquetball. It's still untested with a lot of people. So I guess there is more growth potential left."

Short Shots



Photo Session

Debra Jo Fondren, former *Playboy Magazine* Playmate of the Year, poses with pro Charlie Brumfield at *Racquetball Illustrated* booth at the National Court Club Association (NCCA) trade show at

the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas.

Debra Jo posed with club owners and guests during the two-day show in conjunction with a special club subscription promotion *Racquetball Illustrated* provided to court club owners.

Number One

After a brief interlude during which Mike Yellen took over the number one spot on the pro tour, Marty Hogan has regained the spot he has held for the past three years.

Following Hogan in the NRC rankings are Jerry Hilecher, Yellen, Dave Peck, Rich Wagner, Lindsay Myers, Don Thomas, Steve Strandemo, Craig McCoy and Gregg Peck.

Bobby Bolan ranks 11th, followed by Davey Bledsoe, John Egerman, Doug Cohen and Ben Koltun.

1



Hands vs. Racquet

Women's National champion Heather McKay defeated ranked handball professional Vern Roberts, Jr., 21-15, 21-15, in a special \$1,000 winner-take-all hands-against-racquets challenge match at Kill-shot, Ltd. in Bloomingdale, Ill.

The match was part of Vitter's Super Bowl II tournament put on by Prime Time Promotions.

It was the second straight defeat for Roberts, who lost in a tiebreaker last year to Jennifer Harding.

"She's (McKay) out of the handball players' league," said Roberts.

"I didn't know what to expect," said McKay. "A man came up to me between games and asked me why I wasn't serving hard on my second serve. I told him I wasn't confident enough. Vern was getting me on my soft second serves. He was going to the ceiling very hard. If I let the ball go to the back wall it seemed to die. Then I thought I would get it over with, so I started serving hard on the second serves."

Final Days

Marty Hogan will be going for a fourth consecutive professional national championship June 6-13 at the Arizona Athletic Club in Tempe, Ariz. It was at this club where Hogan defeated Mike Yellen for his second title in 1979. The USRA Amateur Nationals will be held at the same time.

Heather McKay will be defending her WPR National championship, May 13-17 at the Charlie II Club in Palatine, Ill.

The finals of the Ektelon-Perrier Championships will be held April 29-May 3 at the Sports Gallery in Anaheim, Calif. The pro men and women divisions of the tournament will have a purse of \$40,000.

The AARA Nationals will be held May 21-25 at The Courthouse in Boise, Ida.

Cable Coverage

Racquetball has made it to television... in Buffalo, N.Y. at least.

Charlie Garfinkel is now in the middle of a series of instruction shows that are shown on Buffalo's cable network immediately following Buffalo Sabres hockey games.

Garfinkle has been instructing on such topics as "How to Avoid Losing," "How To Practice," "The Mystique of the Left-hander," "Lessons Are A Must," and "Life On The Pro Tour."

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Olympic Health Club
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(716) 833-5226

Buffalo
4 Wall Courts
580 Cayuga Road
(716) 632-1984

Cedarhurst
Executive Courts West
395 Pearsall Avenue
(516) 239-3500

Dewitt
Dewitt Clubhouse
Widewater Parkway
(315) 466-0376

Happaage
Off The Wall Racquetball, Inc.
230 Deser Avenue
(516) 249-0828

Howard Beach
Lindenwood Racquetball
82-12 151st Avenue
(212) 738-5151

Liverpool
Meadows Clubhouse
4989 Hopkins Road
(315) 451-1551

New York
Manhattan Squash Club
1114 Avenue of Americas
(212) 869-8969

New York
Racquetball Fifth Avenue
25 W. 39th Street, 10018
(212) 944-0144

Patchogue
ABC Racquetball Courts, Inc.
620 Old Medford Avenue
(516) 475-3758

Rochester
Winton Racquetball Club
3120 South Windon Road
(716) 271-3700

Troy
The Troy Courts
3863 Rochester Road
(313) 689-5415

Utica
Courtland Racquetball
45100 Mound Road
(313) 254-1056

Westbury, L.I.
Health 'n' Sports
1020 Old Country Road
(516) 996-8855

Westvale
Westvale Clubhouse
3328 West Genessee Street
(315) 488-3126

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque
Supreme Courts
4100 Prospect N.E.
(505) 266-7781

Las Cruces
Tom Young's Racquet Club
305 East Foster
(505) 526-4477

NORTH CAROLINA
Charlotte
Court Club of Charlotte
6420 Albemarle Road

Charlotte
Sports Illustrated Court Club 17
550177 Center Drive
(704) 527-0975

Greensboro
Sportime Racquet Club
P.O. Box 21667
(919) 275-2521

Raleigh
Carolina Courts
1207 Front Street
(919) 832-5513

Raleigh
Highwoods Racquetball Club
2912 Highwoods Boulevard
(919) 876-3641

Winston Salem
Racquetball & Handball Club
of Winston Salem
301 Executive Park Blvd.
(919) 765-0691

OHIO
Chardon
Gaugha Fitness & Racquet
Club
160 Parker Court, Route 6
(419) 281-1323

Cincinnati
Pat Matson's Racquetball
Handball Fitness World, Ltd.
4780 Cornwell Road
(513) 791-9116

Columbus
Arlington Court Club
5005 Arlington Center Blvd.
(614) 451-1930

Columbus
Courtside Racquetball &
Handball
1635 East Dublin-Grandville
(614) 885-BALL

Columbus
Racqueteer Club
2400 Park Crescent Drive
(614) 864-7676

Columbus
The Supreme Court Racquet
Club
1290 W. Henderson Rd., 43220
(614) 459-4700

Dayton
Dayton Circuit Courts Assoc.
1497 Shoup Mill Road
(513) 276-9595

Dayton
Dayton Circuit Courts East
3182 Rodenbeck Drive
(513) 429-2819

Holland
Spring Meadows Court Club
6834 Spring Valley Road
(419) 866-1101

Kettering
Court Management Company,
Inc.
1240 Ridgeview Avenue
(513) 294-5830

Kettering
Dayton Circuit Courts No. 2
5600 Kentshire Drive
(513) 435-3113

Madiera
Court House East Ltd.
8229 Camargo Road
(513) 271-3388

Mansfield
Circuit Courts
2124 Park Avenue W. 44906
(419) 529-5503

Massillon
Glove & Racquet
3885 Wales Road N.W.
(216) 837-9602

Moraine
Dayton Court House
2750 Bertwyn Drive
(513) 294-0700

OKLAHOMA
Oklahoma City
Racquet Time Courts
6701 Wilshire Boulevard
(405) 721-9205

Stillwater
Racquet Time of Stillwater
1225 North Perkins Road
(405) 372-8655

OREGON
Eugene
Court Sports I
2510 Oakmont Way
(503) 687-2811

Eugene
Court Sports II
4242 Commerce Street
(503) 687-2255

Medford
Medford Superior Courts
727 Cardley Avenue
(503) 772-3194

Milwaukee
Milwaukee Racquetball Club
4606 S.E. Boardman
(503) 659-3845

Ontario
Eastern Oregon Sports
366 S.E. 5th Street
(503) 881-1323

Portland
USA Oregon Athletic Club
8333 N.E. Russell
(503) 254-5546

PENNSYLVANIA

Erie
Forest Hills Athletic Club
3910 Caughey Road
(814) 833-2468

Feasterville
B & R Racquetball Club
1040 Mill Creek Park
(215) 355-2700

Harrisburg
Bentley Club and Courts
2301 Grimes Drive
(717) 454-4231

Hollidaysburg
Neves Racquetball Club
RD 2 Scotch Valley Road
(814) 696-3837

Lancaster
Greenfield Court Club
1845 William Penn Way
(717) 392-4194

Lower Burrell
Hilcrest Racquet Club
No. One High School Drive
(412) 339-7100

Monroeville
Racquet Time of Monroeville
Old William Penn Hwy. & Duff
(412) 373-1911

Southampton
Fox Racquetball Club
Second Street Pike &
Jaymor Road
(215) 322-8080

RHODE ISLAND

East Providence
Playoff Racquetball/
Handball Club
15 Catamore Boulevard
(401) 434-3600

Warwick
Corner Shot Racquetball Club
43 Jefferson Boulevard
(401) 781-1650

TENNESSEE

Kingsport
Kingsport Racquetball Club
2008 American Way, 37663
(615) 245-0264

Memphis
Center Courts, Inc.
2611 South Mendenhall Road
(901) 682-6661

Memphis
Don Kessinger Court Club
1010 June Road
(901) 682-6661

TEXAS
Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi Racquetball Club
1017 Barry Street
(512) 855-4175

Dallas
Racquetball at Northpark
8878 N. Central Expressway
(214) 692-6000

Houston
Courts Etc. Racquetball Center
14690 Memorial Drive, 77079
(713) 497-7570

Houston
Westchase Racquetball Club
10303 Westchase Drive, 77042
(713) 977-4804

Lake Jackson
Two Guys Racquetball Club
110 Heather Lane
(713) 297-1731

San Antonio
Racquetball & Handball Clubs
of San Antonio
121 N.W. Loop 410
(512) 349-8596

San Antonio
Racquetball & Handball Clubs
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7700 Tonto Drive
(512) 349-8596

WASHINGTON

Seattle
Tennis World
7245 West Marginal Way
(206) 767-4400

Spokane
The Spokane Club
West 1002 Riverside Avenue
(509) 838-8511

Turnwater
Turnwater Valley Racquet Club
4833 Turnwater Valley Drive
(106) 352-3400

WISCONSIN

Chippewa Falls
Pinetree Racquetball Club
910 Bridgewater Avenue
(715) 723-2255

Menomonee Falls
Falls Racquetball Club
1485 W. 15960 Appleton Ave.
(414) 251-1420

Milwaukee
The Brockfield Racquetball Club
670 Larry Court
(414) 782-6121

Milwaukee
North Shore Racquet Club
5750 North Glen Park Road
(414) 351-2900

Milwaukee
South Shore Racquet Club
4801 South 2nd Street
(414) 482-3410

West Allis
The Racquet Ball Club, Inc.
1939 South 108th Street
(414) 321-2500

Waukesha
Racquetball Club of Waukesha
1530 East Moreland Blvd.
(414) 544-4111

WYOMING

Laramie
Slim & Swim Health Club
411 South 20th Street
(307) 742-4760

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Burnaby
Brentwood Racquetball Club
5502 Lougheed Highway
(604) 294-8348

Nanaimo
Quarter Way Racquet Club
1451 Bowen Road, V9S 1G4

Vancouver
Supreme Court Racquetball
Club
1114 Abern. Street
(604) 669-3636

ONTARIO, CANADA

Calgary
Racquet Club LTD
1305 33rd Street N.W.
AB T2A 5P1

Edmonton
Riverbend Racquet Club
5637 Riverbend Road
AB T6H 5H4

Halifax
Atlantic News
5560 Morris Street
B3J 1C2

Oakville
Aldenlea Racquetball
(Oakville) Limited
474 Innesville Shore Road
(416) 842-2366

OFF THE WALL



Photo by Milo Muslin

THE NEXT SHOT...

Another lineup of interesting stories are on tap for our June issue:

TRAVEL GUIDE

A look at racquetball in Honolulu and San Francisco.

RESORTS/CAMPS

All the exotic places to play this summer.

ONE OF THOSE DAYS

Another off-beat photo section.

MOST IMPROVED

A feature on high-ranked woman pro Lynn Adams.

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Coverage of the men's stop from Houston and the women's tournament from Seattle.

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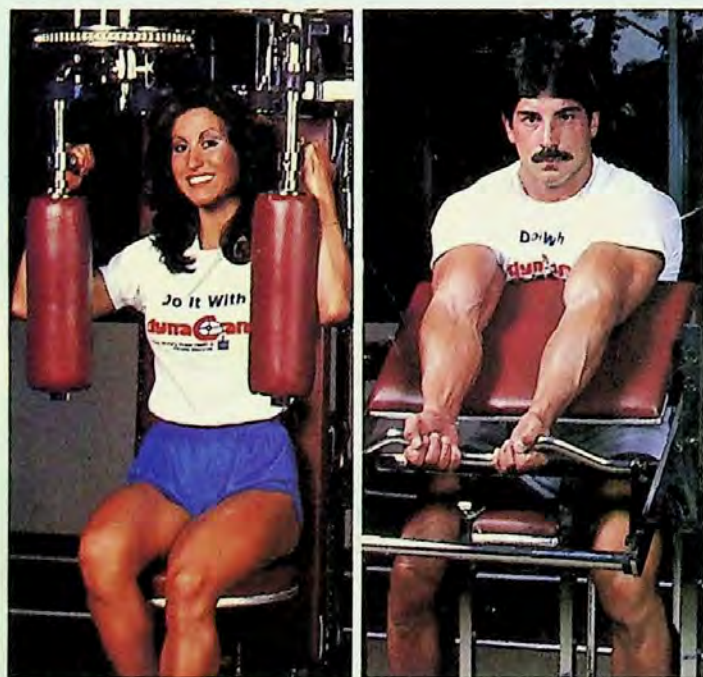
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