

Racquetball Reporter

Fourth Quarter

Volume XI, Issue 4

Fecher retires from RAM Board of Directors

by Chris Cole

Following years of exemplary volunteer service, Lou Ellen Fecher recently announced her resignation for the RAM Board of Directors.

Lou Ellen has been with the organization for over a decade. She's held several positions on the Board, most notably the Treasurer duties since 1991.

Besides Treasurer, Lou Ellen has helped run Regional tournaments and every State Doubles and Singles Championships in Michigan for the last decade. In addition, for several years in the 80s, she ran the hugely successful Super Seven series of tournaments and assisted Jim Hiser during the 12 years he promoted the Men's Pro Stop at the Davison Athletic Club.

The main and understandable reason for Lou Ellen's resignation centers on her two daughters, Amanda (16) and Jessica (14). As a junior and freshman

in high school, the girls certainly keep both Lou and father Julian busy every day.

Amanda plays the flute in marching band and Lou Ellen is an involved member of their Band Boosters. Jessie is also active and plays on a traveling girl's soccer team and sings in the school choir.

If that weren't enough, Lou also plays in a summer women's soccer league and a mixed fall league out at Grand Blanc's Soccer Zone. Since she doesn't play that much racquetball anymore, this takes care of that competitive fire which used to burn so brightly on the racquetball court.

Girl Scouts? Lou Ellen's got that covered as well as a Troop Leader. Geez, where did she ever find time in the past to be on the RAM Board in the first place!

Will she miss racquetball? "Around the time of year for State Doubles and Singles, I

will surely miss it; the people and excitement surrounding the tournaments. With the girls so active, it's just a matter of priorities and doing things with them," she said.

Spending time with one's children is indeed the greatest thing of all and Michigan's racquetball players surely respect such a decision. However, the players will all miss Lou Ellen's work and dedication to RAM members, but especially miss her smiling face at Doubles and Singles each year.

RAM wishes to extend all our best wishes to Lou Ellen, Julian, sister-in-law Anne Fecher and good luck to Amanda and Jessica. We will miss you!

**2001 RAM
STATE DOUBLES**

**ENTRY FORM
ENCLOSED**

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View of the President

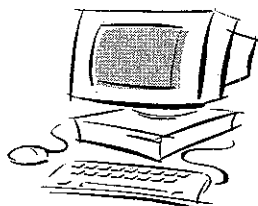
The purpose of the newsletter is to get you to play in the State Doubles at Total Sports December 1 & 2. Just like last year, renew your membership at that tournament and you can play the second event for free!! Last year almost half of the tournament players took advantage of this GREAT DEAL. This year there is one other catch!!! The USRA is raising memberships to \$30 on January 1, 2002, so in effect you will save \$22 by enrolling in the USRA at the tournament. The entry form for the tournament is on the back page. You can also enter by addressing our web site **michiganracquetball.org**. Kevin Thomas has done quite a job with the web site. For this tournament you can enter and find out your starting time online. Remember we will do everything possible to limit Friday play to disadvantage as few players as possible. Draws of 16 or more may have to play Friday evening.

Some good tournaments have already been completed as I write this including the West Michigan Open and Players doubles tournament. Both of these tournaments had draws of almost one hundred players. The Senior Masters and Felica's tournament will be the next. Felica's is at Franklin November 16, which is one of the nicest clubs in the State.

The good news with all these early tournaments is our membership is UP! We are trying to over the 500 mark for the first time since the early eighties. Please continue to help by renewing and getting your buddies to sign up as well. I am still trying to find a site for State Singles and a schedule date. Ideas? Don't forget to congratulate your new RAM leadership, Twayne as treasurer and Jack White as a board member. Last, Happy Thanksgiving and we will see you on the hardwood at Total Sports.

Michigan Racquetball on the Web!

www.michiganracquetball.org



Racquetball Association of Michigan

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Jack Huczek
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Newsletter
The Racquetball Reporter
2834 Yale St.
Flint, MI 48503

West Michigan Open Tourney Successful

by Twayne Howard

The West Michigan Open jump-started the season as 138 competitors came to enjoy great play, food, prizes and fun at one of the most popular stops on the Michigan racquetball circuit. A fifty-percent growth in entrants over last year's tournament reflects the popularity of this event, and offers testament to racquetball's growth in Michigan.

The West Michigan Open is held as a fund-raiser for the West Michigan Juniors Program and they were the biggest winners once again this year. A raffle of Ektelon equipment, lessons, stringing and other donated items raised \$300 to support the program. Thirteen Juniors participated at an entry of only \$15 each. Until then, the funds will provide court time, and help Juniors travel to tournaments.

The tournament staff would like to thank our sponsors: The Michigan Athletic Club, Ektelon, AD Design, Perrigo Printing, Mike Anderson at Anderson Screen Printing, Andre Roy, Jim Hamilton, Chris Cole, and Dale Brown for the generous contributions. Most of all we'd like to thank all the players who made the trek from Eastern and Central Michigan, throughout the Great Lakes region, and as far away as Missouri. We could not do it without you, and we look forward to seeing each of you next time.

A highlight of the tournament was getting to see the beneficiaries of our efforts as the Juniors took to the courts on Saturday. Several of these players traveled to Junior Regionals last spring with financial support from the West Michigan Open proceeds.

The 10- and 8- Divisions combined

for some great round robin play. Cullen Dame took 1st Place after edging out Trenton Balavitch in the 10- Division and Dan Poindexter won the 8- Division over Trent Chester.

J.D. Brown took the 14- Division Championship defeating Mark Chester in the Finals. JD is one of our best Junior prospects and already holds a State D Title. Look for big things from him in years to come.

Scott Lyons fell to regular sparring

partner Alex Brown in the 16- Division finals. This division was full of local talent that will continue to enjoy racquetball's growth.

In the Women's Open Division, round robin play was the order of the day. After two preliminary rounds, Laura Patterson met Felicia Mann in the final match to determine a champion. These long-time competitors fought their way through two tough

Continued on page four

Letter to the Editor:

Thanks and praise for support at National Doubles Tourney

Before this year I only knew one K.G. And that K.G. played for the NBA Minnesota Timberwolves. He stands 7'1", dominates the middle, has a huge diamond in his ear, and loves the game of basketball. I cannot get close to that K.G. — not even an autograph. However, I did get close to another K.G. at the National Doubles Tournament in Las Vegas October 2-7, 2001. This K.G. is a retired principal, stands 4'11", dominates the forehand side, and loves the game of racquetball. Can you guess who this is? Her name is Karen Green.

I write this letter because I can neither give you the play by play action of our matches nor can I remember the scores. I thought that this would be a wonderful medium to express my thanks to my doubles partner. Thank you Karen. You took me to a different level.

She told me as I approached the service box in our second match of a tiebreaker game to serve the best serve of my life. I knew what serve I was going to do before she told me (My coach/racquetball mentor Chris Cole has taught me to know this before serving). Nevertheless, my partner motivated me to do my best and I say thank you Karen.

My partner used healthy habits and motivation but also she developed a mantra based acronym-----RANK, which stands for Regroup, Always take your shot, No unforced errors, Keep the ball in play. It might seem a little silly but it worked for us.

The morning of the finals match we proceeded through our morning ritual: oatmeal, nap, visualizing, and had our light snack. (During the match) we took timely timeouts. She chowed on bananas, I did not. And once again we stood at crossroads of 10-10 in the tiebreaker. She told me to serve the best serve of my life. I did not. But, with all the encouraging words, the pumping of the fist, the loud "YES" after a good shot, and the continual motivation, it happened. WE WON. With a big grin and a huge hug, I say thank-you K.G. You have the biggest heart that I know a person can have.

I would also like to thank other people who helped me with this feat: Faye, Virgil, Alex, Laura (L.P.), Chris, BOB (remember him Karen), and Claire (for the post celebration items).

PEACE, Steff
(Stephanie Cobb)

West Michigan Open Tourney Results continued

Continued on page from page three

games and into a tiebreaker before Laura pulled away and closed it out for the win. Possibly motivating Laura was her loss to Felicia the day before in the Women's 35+ Division Finals which gave Felicia the Championship.

The first round of the Women's A/B/C Division's paired ladies from each division in the first round, before splitting them off to Women's A and Women's B/C. Diana Courtney earned her top seed in the Women's A Division with her victory over Barbara Westveer. Michele Poindexter won a tough match over Peggy Jane Johnson to take home the Women's B/C Title. Michele had to fight her asthma throughout the match. It was great to see several new faces in this draw, and we hope they become regulars.

The Men's Open Division served as a coming-out party for two of West Michigan's finest young players. Brandon Cortese and Shannon Kohl, who have been sparring partners for five years, each advanced to the Open Final. After trading 15-7 games, the tiebreaker was a war with excellent play from both. Brandon put on a late run to go up 10-6 before seeing that lead evaporate as Shannon pushed it to 10-10. Both players were shooting lights-out to the end. After missing one chance at match point, Brandon hit a winner that squibbed off the left wall to claim his first Open Division Championship. Mom and Dad Cortese exploded with the rest of the crowd. Another great chapter has been written in West Michigan's racquetball history.

The Men's A Division featured a big win by Randy Pagels over John Gervasi. Randy fought through a

tough draw for his biggest career win.

Tom Ford overcame a sore wrist to defeat Mike Sobczyk in the Men's B Division. After injuring his knee in last year's WMO, Mike promised he'd be back. We didn't doubt him then, and it sure looks like he was right. Congratulations to Tom, and welcome back Mike.

As always, the Men's C division was one of the largest and most competitive. In the end Kevin O'Keefe proved to be too much for Dan Whiston, who was making his C Division debut.

Roy Perovich defeated Tony Gardner in the Men's D Finals. Roy was playing his first tournament, and I predict it won't be his last.

The Men's 19+ Open Division Final featured a rematch between Jake Cardona and Brandon Cortese. In the end, Jake exacted his revenge and took home the crown.

Top-seeded Mark Bachman defeated big-hitting Robert Shurlow in the Men 19+C/D Finals. Look out for both of these guys as the season continues.

Top-seeded Jason Gorski fell to Andre Roy in the Men's 25+A/B Championship. It's amazing what you can accomplish when you don't have to take each match to a tiebreaker.

After many years on the sidelines, Bobby Blacksher has returned to racquetball with a vengeance. Bobby won the Men's 35+ Division by fighting his way past Chuck White, still stinging from his early exit from the Open Division.

Mike McMillan topped a tough Men's 35+A/B Division by defeating second-seeded Attica Mitchell in the Finals.

Doug Flessner prevailed over Jeffrey Young in the Men's 35+C/D Division.

Jim Schenk II traveled from Indiana to take the Men's 45+ Division by defeating Rick Scott in the Finals. As always, this is one of the most entertaining divisions to watch and this draw was no different.

John Gervasi defeated Joe Romeo in the Finals of the Men's 45+A/B Division. This finish gave John a First and a Second for the tournament. Not a bad weekend's work.

Roy Perovich completed the daily double by defeating Barry Dennis in the Men's 45+C/D Division.

Bill Hagedorn defeated David Lund for the Men's 55+Open Championship.

The Men's 55+ Intermediate Championship went to Spark Overway as he got past Tom Sharum in the Finals. This match featured the top two seeds, and was a great one to watch.

The Men's B/C Doubles featured Bob Goodin and Joe Romeo defeating Jason Carroll and Tim Theisen to claim the Championship. This also proved to be a very competitive division, and is a great warm-up for States.

The team of Brandon Cortese and Shannon Kohl took on the team of Augie Pasko and Jeff Mullins in the Men's Open Doubles Championship. In the first game, it looked exactly like Brandon and Shannon had just gotten done with their Men's Open Finals as they lost by a wide margin. In the second game, the kids regrouped and showed how they got to their second Final. In the tiebreaker, Brandon and Shannon put it all together and steam-rolled Augie and Jeff to take the Championship.

Thanks to all the players and sponsors

Racquetball Association of Michigan
presents the
2001 RAM STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

December 1 & 2, 2001

at the

Total Sports Club
40501 Production Dr., Harrison Twp., MI
Phone: (810) 463-2000

Directors: Tom Blakeslee (810) 217-8668 and Iwayne Howard (616) 771-0312

Fees: \$25.00 per person/\$50.00 per team/per event
Non-USRA members add \$20.00
(Play is limited to 2 events)

\$15.00 per person/second event
**FREE SECOND EVENT IF YOU RENEW
YOUR USRA MEMBERSHIP!**
**USRA MEMBERSHIP GOES UP TO \$30
JANUARY 1, 2002 — SAVE NOW!**

USRA Sanctioned: *Yearly USRA membership required. USRA Rules will prevail. Two games to 15, tiebreaker to 11.*

Trophies and Awards: Trophies will be awarded to first and second place winners in divisions with draws of at least eight. Each entrant will receive a complimentary **tournament souvenir**.

Starting times: Play begins on Saturday, December 1, 2001. Divisions are limited to draws of 16 (in divisions of 16, some Friday play may be necessary). Call the club Thursday, November 29, 2001 after 7:00 PM for starting times or check the website. **Efforts will be made to reduce Friday and Sunday play.**

Tournament Ball: PENN ULTRA BLUE

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 26, 2001

Name _____	Partner 1 _____
Address _____	Partner 2 _____
City _____ Zip Code _____	Club Affiliation _____
Phone (days) _____ (evenings) _____	Date of Birth _____

Make checks payable to RAM and mail to:

RAM STATE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS
111 Pearl St., NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Entry Fee: _____

USRA: _____

Total: _____

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

Signature _____ Date _____
(guardian signature if over 18)

DIVISIONS

circle correct choices/limit two events

MENS	WOMENS
------	--------

Open	25+	40B	60+
A	30A	45A	Mixed Open
B	30B	45B	Mixed A
C	35A	50A	Mixed B
D	35B	50B	Mixed C
	40A	55+	Mixed D

*Divisions may be combined if less
than 8 teams enter a division*

Alternate Division _____

For more info, check out the website: www.michiganracquetball.org

JOIN THE RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

Membership includes:

- *Membership card, USRA official rule book, travel and equipment discounts
- *USRA medical, life and liability insurance at sanctioned events
- *Four issues of the RAM newsletter, *The Racquetball Reporter*
- *Six issues of the USRA national publication, *Racquetball Magazine*
- *RAM sanctioned tournament entry forms mailed to your home
- *Eligibility to play in all sanctioned tournaments and receive state and national ranking points

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SUPPORT THE US NATIONAL TEAM DONATIONS TAX DEDUCTIBLE

DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DATE OF BIRTH ____/____/____ HOME PHONE _____

- _____ \$20.00 Adult competitor _____ \$15.00 Junior Competitor
_____ \$10.00 Junior Competitor (without *Racquetball Magazine* subscription)
_____ \$15.00 *Racquetball Magazine* subscription only

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