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ILLUSTRATED

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ACCORDING TO
MARK TWAIN**

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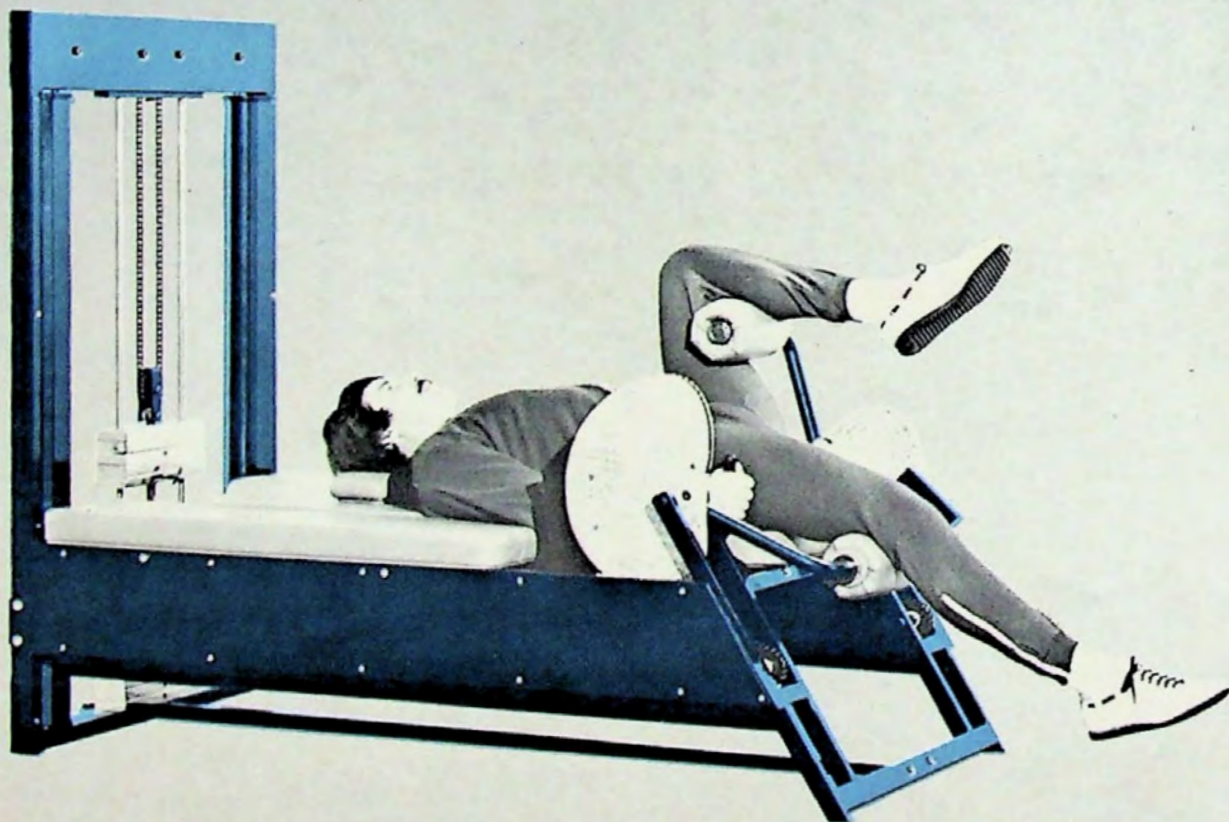
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RACQUETBALL

ILLUSTRATED

January 1980

Vol. 3, No. 1

FEATURES

13

SHORT VS. TALL In racquetball, is it better to be short and stocky or tall and lanky?

18

THE STATE OF THE SPORT What was it like in 1979 and where is it going in the 1980s?

24

THE WORLD OF RACQUETBALL ... ACCORDING TO MARK TWAIN A humor piece dealing with how Twain would have viewed the game.

48

RICHARD HATCH AND EXISTENTIAL RACQUETBALL The co-star of Battlestar Gallactica has some unusual things to say about the sport.

52

THE NEW BREED A capsule look at some of the juniors who are destined to become the top pros of the future.

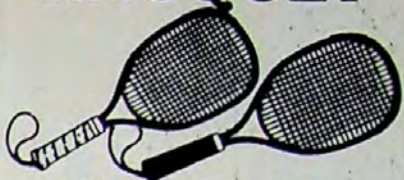
DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Up Front
- 6 Side Out
- 10 Players
- 58 Short Shots
- 60 Rx for Winning—Eye Injuries
- 62 Club News
- 64 Tournaments
- 71 Fashion Rac
- 75 Club Directory
- 80 Off The Wall

INSTRUCTION GUIDE

- 28 Forehand by Jay Jones
- 30 Backhand by Lynn Adams
- 32 Serving by Victor I. Spear, M.D.
- 36 Positioning by Janell Marriott
- 37 Service Returns by Jennifer Harding and Jean Sauser
- 39 Kill Shots by Dave Peck
- 41 The Ceiling Ball by Jack Kramer
- 42 Wallpaper Shots by Jerry Hilecher
- 43 The Other Arm by Davey Bledsoe
- 44 How To Practice by Victor I. Spear, M.D.

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UP FRONT



Enter the Eighties

When history looks back as to why racquetball made such an impression in The Seventies, the chronologists must take another step backward and look into The Sixties.

In The Sixties, people were more concerned with helping others. In The Seventies, people were more concerned with helping themselves.

The Sixties was an era of political activity, vibrancy and outspokenness. The Seventies was an era of personal activity, vibrancy and outspokenness. The Sixties may have burned people out, creating a backlash of sorts that produced an attitude of, "Let me help myself before I can think about helping others."

If you take a look at surveys, you'll find it was individual sports that made the biggest gains in The Seventies. Tennis showed the biggest rise in the early 70s, jogging broke through in the mid-70s and racquetball picked up the pace in the last half of the decade.

All this can be verified in the recent A. C. Nielsen Company survey, which showed racquetball as the "nation's hottest sport." The survey noted (see Short Shots) that racquetball was up 283 per cent over a period from 1976-79, more than double the growth rate of any other sport.

But the Nielsen Survey reports on the past. It stops short of predicting the future. And the future is basically what RACQUETBALL ILLUSTRATED talks about in Sandra Segal's article "The State Of The Sport."

According to Segal's research, racquetball participation has increased over the past few years and is expected to increase in the future but the increase rates are getting smaller and smaller.

There is also a slight overbuilding in some areas—mostly major cities—and not enough of a growth in smaller cities.

More money is being poured into the sport in the form of consumer advertisements, whether it be for television or magazines, and the biggest explosion is yet to come—the day national television focuses on the game as a spectator sport.

Racquetball has not reached its peak yet. That is expected to come in the early 80s. Naturally, a stabilization will follow, perhaps, even a decline in the number of participants. Inevitably, some clubs will close and some companies will go under or redefine their interests.

The decline will come from the people who view racquetball as a social sport; the ones who have taken it up because it is the so-called thing to do.

So, if we had to make predictions as to where racquetball will be in 1984, we would say that: 1. It will not be the nation's "hottest sport," according to a Nielsen survey. Its percentage of increase will drop. 2. Its rank in popularity will increase. Racquetball currently ranks 21st in popularity with 10,600,000 participants. That ranking should move up to the top 15 by 1984. 3. Racquetball will be seen periodically on television. 4. It will gain in popularity as a spectator sport but never reach the levels of tennis in this regard. It will remain more of a participant sport. 5. It will stay as one of the most popular sports for fitness and exercise.

In addition to the "State Of The Sport" article we have some other outstanding pieces this issue. Humorist Stephen Stern has done a fine portrayal of how Mark Twain would have viewed the game had he been alive to write about it. Also note the excellent illustration of Twain by Jeff Weekley.

We also have an interesting article on "Short Vs. Tall" by Mike Hogan. Are the best racquetball players short and stocky or tall and lanky?

There is also a feature on actor Richard Hatch (Battlestar Gallactica and Streets of San Francisco). Just because our magazine runs celebrity covers, is no reason to think our accompanying stories are fan-oriented and written just for the sake of publicity. Quite the contrary, we have instructed our free-lance writers to make the celebrity stories say something. Hatch has some unique concepts on the sport, things that have never been said before by anybody.

In this issue, we also present an instruction guide. Every year or so, we will do this. It gives people a chance to get back to the basics. During the year, we usually focus on specific forms of the game. In this issue, we give more general articles—forehand, backhand, serving, return of serve, practice, etc. But we purposely haven't covered everything. If we did we wouldn't have anything left to cover the rest of the year.

Ben Kalb

Ben Kalb

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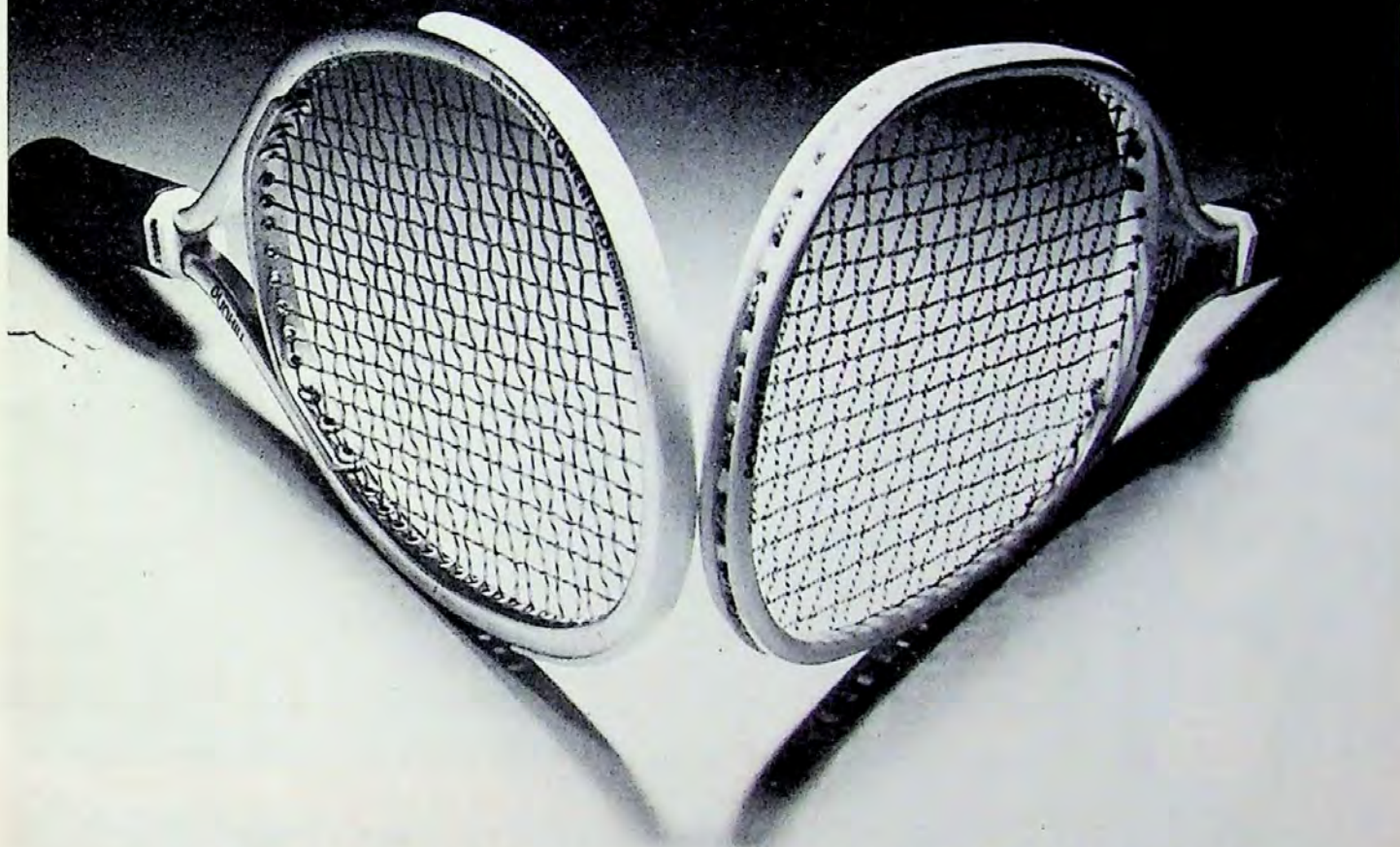
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SIDE OUT

Power Game

While I seldom comment on magazine articles, I felt compelled to register concern over the gibberish, lack of clarity and the confusion concerning the development of power in a stroke (The Power Game, Nov. 1979).

Words like "snapping," "popping," "cracking the whip," etc. really do an injustice to the kinesiological miracle that occurs when someone like Marty Hogan develops power on a stroke.

There are many good physical educators around. I'm sure many of them play racquetball or handball and they could describe for you in lay terms the wonderful things that Marty does intuitively.

No disrespect to Charlie Brumfield, and some of his analogies may work for somebody, but it doesn't have to be a guessing situation. That isn't to say that if everyone could develop their top potential with the correct elements of a stroke that anybody else would hit it as hard as Marty does.

I suggest you hire an outstanding photographer with a very fast camera, take a few thou-

sand shots of Marty in action, and examine those points in Marty's stroke where each new level begins to move independently in the stroke. You will then have a sequence that indicates the points at which each new acceleration occurs since it is this being moved and moving independently of each separate lever that makes up the whole result, which in Marty's case is a ball that travels nearly 150 miles per hour.

If there is a physical education consultant on your staff he did not do his job in regard to Hogan's article.

Philip Smith
Physical Education Director
Jewish Community Centers Association
St. Louis, Mo.

Editor's Note: The article in question was not staff written. The story, as noted, was an excerpt from a book written by Marty Hogan and Charlie Brumfield with Arthur Shay. Any comments concerning the article should be directed toward them.

Spalding Says

I read with interest the Ball Guide article in the October issue of RACQUETBALL MAGAZINE. I feel that this sort of article is both timely and important to an industry which is growing as rapidly as this. I do feel, however, that I must share with you a study conducted by Spalding which reveals almost the exact opposite results your professionals determined regarding the Spalding ACE product.

Attached is a fairly detailed document entitled "A Standard for the Liveliness of Racquetballs", a study undertaken by three mechanical engineering professors and one research assistant at the Pennsylvania State University. While I'm sure you will find the reading most interesting, the basic conclusion reached is that the best test for liveliness is rebound. In other words, the highest rebounding ball is also the liveliest ball.

In an effort to determine the relative liveliness of the Spalding ACE, we conducted a competitive ball test on twelve balls each of five competitive brands. At the same time, we determined how these balls performed relative to the standards set forth by the U. S. Racquetball Association and International Racquetball Association.

While this chart is very revealing in a number of areas, it does indicate that the Spalding ACE is the highest rebounding ball currently available in the market today. Coupled with the Penn State study, it would, therefore, indicate that it is the liveliest.

As you can also see, some of the balls in the market today are actually *out-of-specification*, and, therefore, illegal in a number of key areas.

I have attached a letter of certification verifying the test methodology and accuracy.

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I recognize that individuals are more subjective than clinical tests, however, I also feel that the article has severely misrepresented the true nature of our product.

R. Ringer
Product Manager
Spalding
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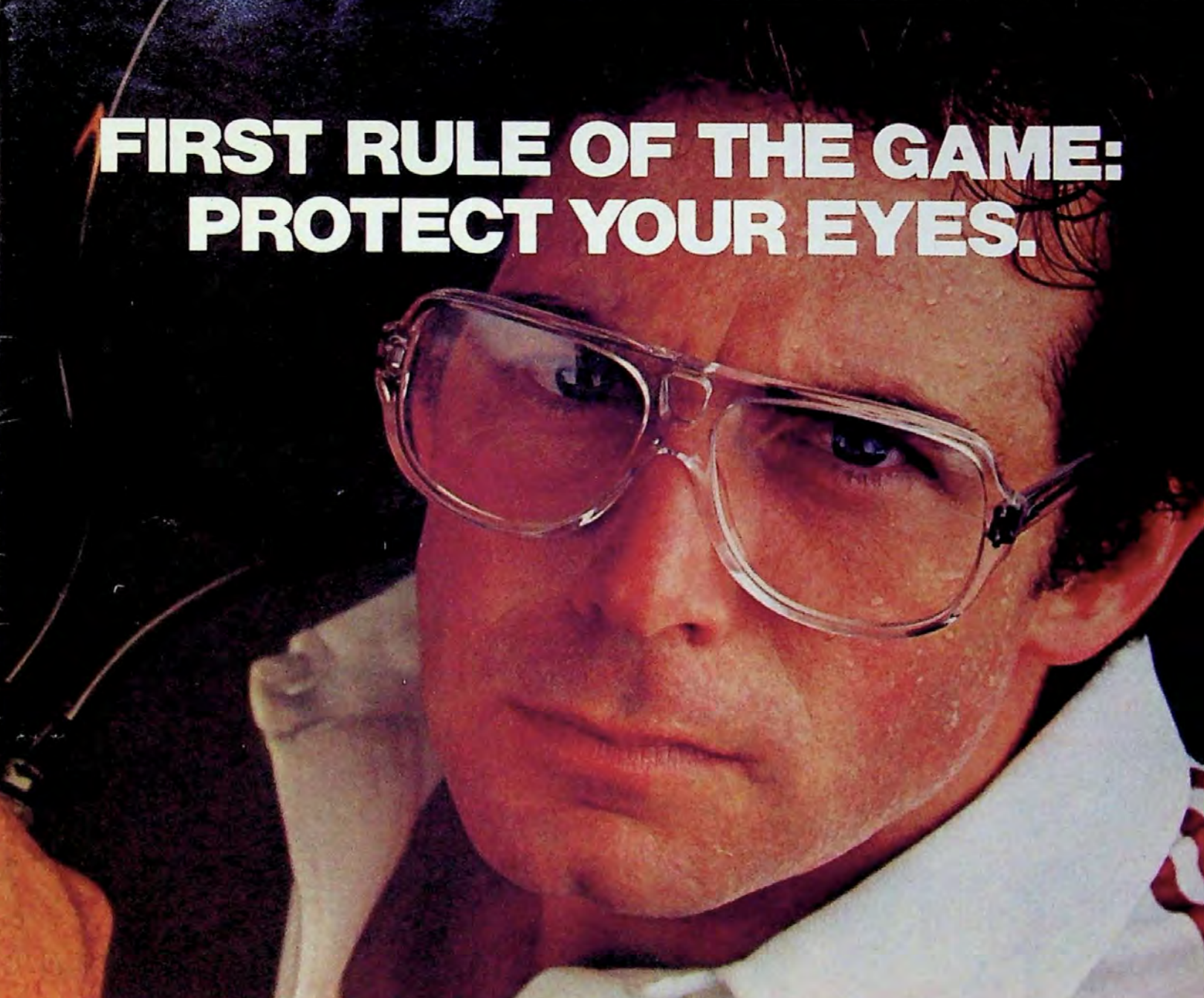
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Peck Nomination

Being nominated for the "Most Improved Player of the Year" by *Racquetball Illustrated* was a real honor for David Peck. He is extremely pleased to see that the accomplishments he has achieved over the past year have not gone by unnoticed.

When he began last season as a rookie on the professional racquetball tour, he was ranked in the #39 position. Because of this ranking, he knew that he was faced with a

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vision, a snug, comfortable fit. We know you want confident protection that can *add* to your game, not detract from it.

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SIDE OUT

year of determination and hard work if he was going to be successful as a professional racquetball player. Well, as the season went on he became more and more successful and by the end of the season he had earned the respect of both players and sponsors of the tour. As a result of his accomplishments, he has improved his ranking by 33 positions and he started the new season as the #6 ranked professional. David is looking forward to an even more successful year on the tour and promises to maintain the same image and quality of play which have earned him this nomination."

Jerry Day
Norman, Okla.

Editor's Note: Day is Peck's Player Representative. Others nominated for "most improved" player of the year were Marci Greer, David Fleetwood, Heather McKay and Linda Prefontaine.

Ball Guide

I am writing to confirm your permission to reprint the "First Annual Ball Guide" from the October 1979 issue of *Racquetball Illustrated*.

The article will be published in our monthly newsletter—*Wallbangers World*—and mailed to 13,000 of our members.

The article will be reprinted in full without the photographs and with a credit line to *Racquetball Illustrated*

Carolyn Whetzel
Marketing Coordinator
Wallbangers
Daly City, Calif.

Psyching Out

I was somewhat amused to read "Step Into Your Mind" (Oct. 1979) in which Charlie Brumfield gives a few pointers on how to psych out an opponent.

Though a well written article, I actually chuckled because I had just finished reading the article on the 1979 Nationals from Tempe, Ariz.

The article describes how Brumfield fell to pieces in his semifinal match against Mike Yellen over a controversial call in the first game.

Brumfield was leading Yellen 18-7 when the call was made and he went on to actually lose that game and eventually the match.

I guess the most inevitable psych-out artists are subject to psyching themselves out.

Red S. Spencer
Tucson, Ariz.

More Guides

I enjoyed your "ball guide." Could you please do one on shoes and gloves.

Alan French
Memphis, Tenn.

Editor's Note: Watch for our shoe guide next month.

On The News

I had never seen your magazine or even knew it existed until I noticed it on the NBC news one Sunday.

The cover photo of Ruth Buzzi surrounded by all those racquetballs was outstanding. It drove me to the newsstand out of curiosity.

I picked up your magazine, found it very interesting, and enjoyable, and I'm sure I will pick it up again.

Vicki Lassiter
Tacoma, Wash.

Home Sweet Home

I enjoyed the article in your publication on "Racquetball In The Home."

It was most interesting to see what the reasons people have for building their own courts.

I always thought that only snobby people did that to keep up and surpass the Joneses. But after reading your article, I can see that some people really have a need for their own court.

There is still a certain amount of elitism involved, and I always wondered if people did it for publicity sake. It came as a surprise to see that a few people did not want to be quoted. They respected and cherished their privacy.

My wife and I enjoy reading your magazine. Keep up the good work.

W.W. Sandler
Minneapolis, Minn.

Farrah's Place

In all the magazines that have ever published a story on Farrah Fawcett, and heaven knows there must have been hundreds, I have never seen a photo of her home.

So I couldn't believe it when I saw the Majors' home in a racquetball publication of all places.

It was a nice addition to a fine story.

Walter Draper
Metairie, La.

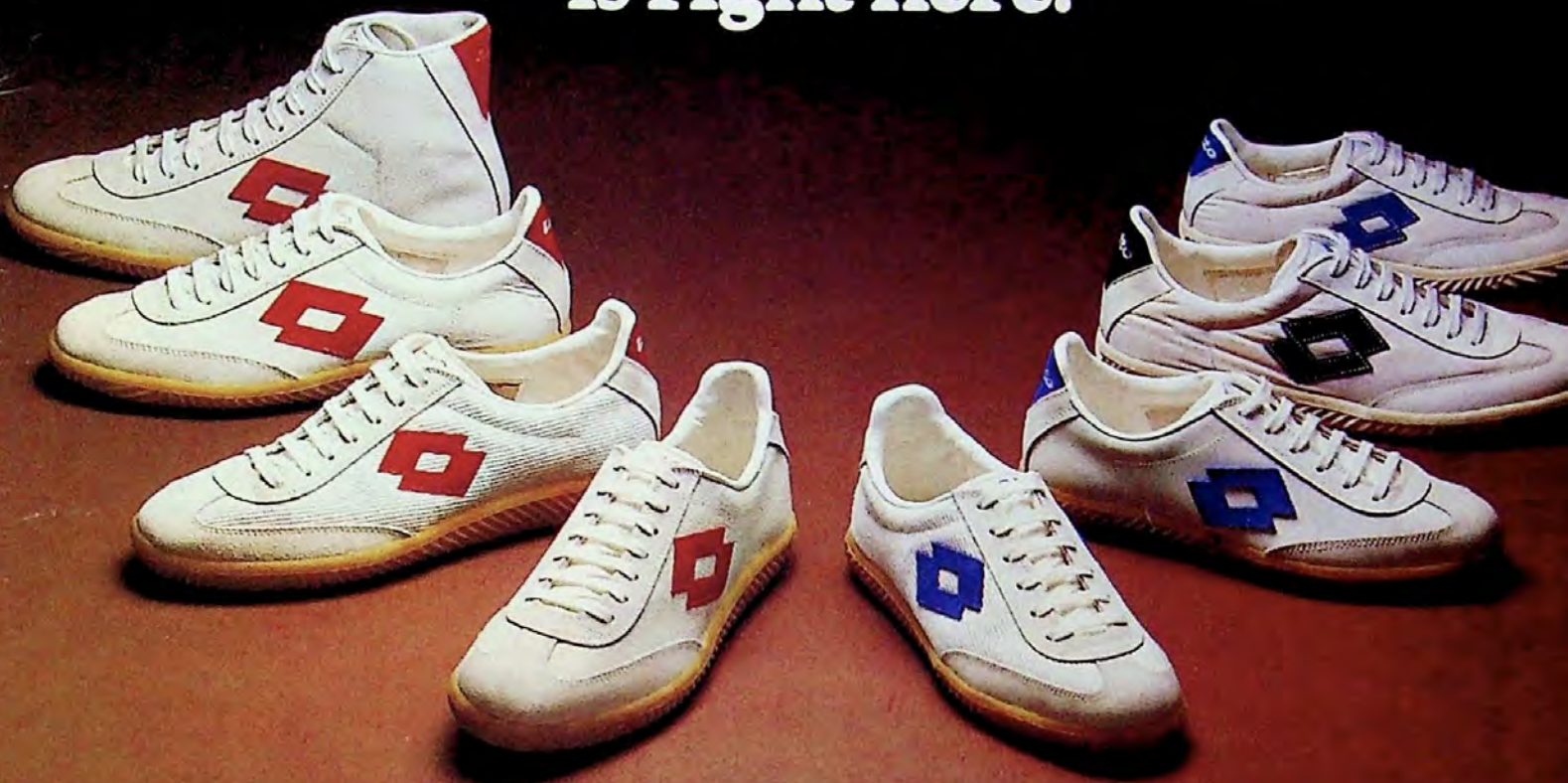
Australia

Our first issue of 'RACQUETBALL ILLUSTRATED' (August) arrived here and I was delighted to read your report on our recent visit to the States ("Aussie Tour"). I have already received a telephone call this morning from our President, Ian Hocking, in Tasmania, and I am sure other members of our party will be equally delighted with the story once they have had an opportunity to read it.

P.J. Allen,
Executive Director,
Australian Racquetball Association
Watville, South Australia

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Mike Yellen

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Jennifer Harding

Lotto

Lotto-Newk USA, San Antonio, Texas.



Training For The Tour

Singer-actor Shaun Cassidy says he took up racquetball to get in shape for his concert tours.

"I move around a lot on stage and I needed something to give me endurance training," says Cassidy, who participated in the Motion Picture Racquetball Classic (for the benefit of Braille Institute) at the Century Racquetball Club in Century City, Calif.

"I used to play a lot of basketball but I found racquetball better exercise."

Cassidy took up the game about nine months ago.



North Dallas Star

Although Tommy Reamon's football career was prematurely interrupted after he appeared in the controversial movie "North Dallas Forty," it may have been a blessing in disguise because his acting career has taken off.

Reamon, who played in the World Football League and later for the Pittsburgh Steelers and Washington Redskins, had a featured part in "North Dallas Forty" as starting wide receiver Del Huddle of the fictitious North Dallas Bulls. The National Football League didn't take too kindly to the satire and according to Reamon the league "blacklisted" him from playing. He wasn't even invited to training camp this season.

"I don't regret playing in the movie, not when you are cast by Lynn Stalmaster and he says he'll use you again," says Reamon. "But I do regret it because I have this football camp for kids and they wonder why I'm not playing."

Since North Dallas Forty, Reamon has had minor roles in such television shows as Eischied, Barnaby Jones and The Jeffersons. He also manages to play racquetball three times a week. "I love the game. It gives me the same kind of feeling as running with the football," he says.

And what about North Dallas Forty? How accurate was it? "It was entertainment and people should treat it as such," says Reamon. "Some things were exaggerated and some things were true."

The Falcon Returns

Pro football players are some of the most active on the celebrity racquetball circuit, and one of the better ones is Atlanta Falcon quarterback Steve Bartkowski, shown here with pro Francine Davis in an exhibition at the Racquetball Centre in Atlanta.

"He's good and quick. He picked up everything," said Davis after beating Bartkowski and several of the other Falcons. "I kept him running and got him tired. I don't think he was ready for a lot of running."

Davis has played several athletes in her celebrity circuit rounds. "Most of the time I like to play. It's great meeting these people," says Davis. "The only time I don't think it should be done is when they set you up with someone who doesn't know how to play. Then it's a joke and someone can get hurt."





In Full Bloom

Although she didn't fare too well in the Motion Picture Racquetball Classic, Lindsay Bloom still loves to play racquetball once a week.

The former Miss USA recently co-starred in

the movie "H.O.T.S." and she has a semi-regular part in Dukes of Hazzard.

"I play the telephone operator," says Bloom. "One time I got blown up but they didn't want to write me out of the series, so they managed to save me."

She is engaged to singer-actor Mayf Nutter.

A Veteran Novice

Although he took up the game over 2½ years ago, actor Lew Saunders still considers himself a novice.

"I can't find the time to play," says Saunders. "I was a regular on CHiPs for two years and we would work from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Now I'm doing 240-Robert and we work from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m."

Saunders says he got into acting by accident. After running track and playing football at Columbia University he began a modeling career. That took him to Las Vegas, where a producer noticed him and offered him a part. A career was born.

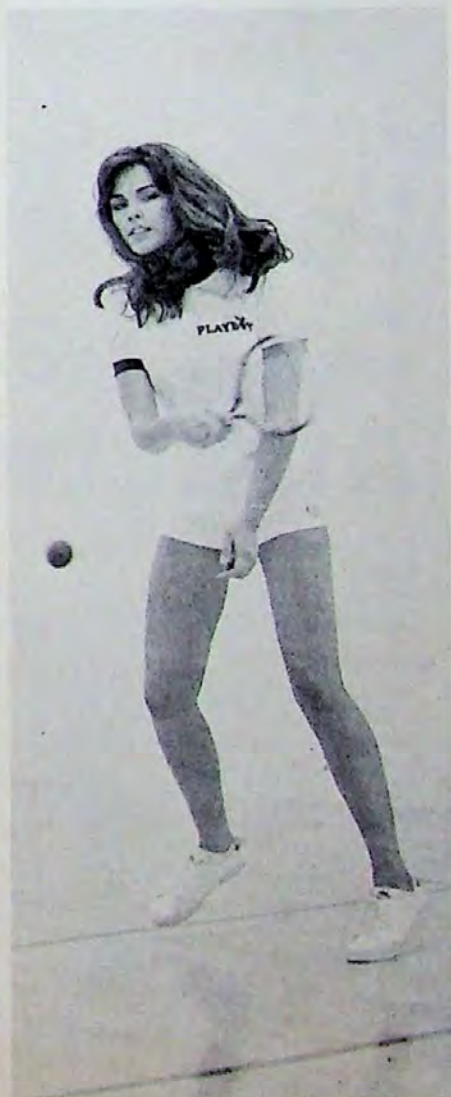


The First Time

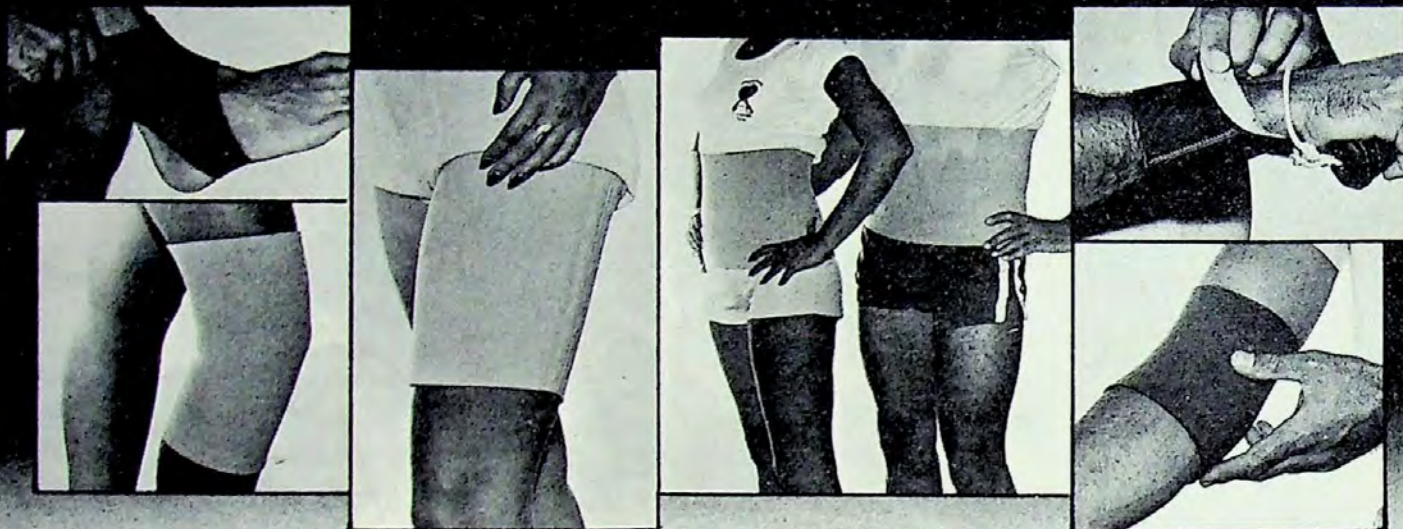
When Lisa Sohm, a former Playboy Playmate of the Month (April '77), arrived at a recent celebrity racquetball tournament, she found herself listed as a playing captain of one of the teams. Only problem was that she had never played before.

After receiving several offers for racquetball tutoring, Lisa got on the court for her first time and found pretty good success keeping the ball in play. "I've seen several people take up the game for the first time and not even hit the wall," said one observer. "But Lisa has a lot of potential. She could be a good player."

Lisa, 24, who recently took a few tennis lessons, figures now she'll spend the time learning racquetball. "I think I'm hooked on this game," she said. "And I have to be ready to play in next year's celebrity tournament."



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SHORT vs. TALL

Is it better to be short and stocky than tall and lanky?

By Mike Hogan

Boxing touts have adhered to the maxim that a good little man can always beat a good big man ever since Jack Dempsey gave it to Jess Willard in 1919. If you are a short professional basketball player, though, you had better be one hell of an outside shooter. Successful rodeo cowboys as well as professional surfers and skiers tend to be in the 5-foot-8 to 5-foot-10 range, but a football player that short had better be just as wide or lightning fast in order to run for his life.

But what about professional racquetball? Size, particularly height, seems to have a significant impact on performance in most sports and it is only logical to assume the same must be true in racquetball.

A cursory examination of the male racquetball pros reveals that we are really talking

about a range of six or eight inches at most, although longer arms may also be an added dimension.

A discussion of size differences among the ladies on the pro tour, though, has little relevance, says national champion Karin Walton, because nearly all the women are about the same height and weight. The only exception, she says, is fellow pro Janell Marriott who is a little taller than the rest.

"Generally, fitness is a more important factor among the women than body size," says Walton.

Among the male players, though, there is a near unanimous opinion that height and, to a certain extent, physique, contribute or detract from a player's abilities.

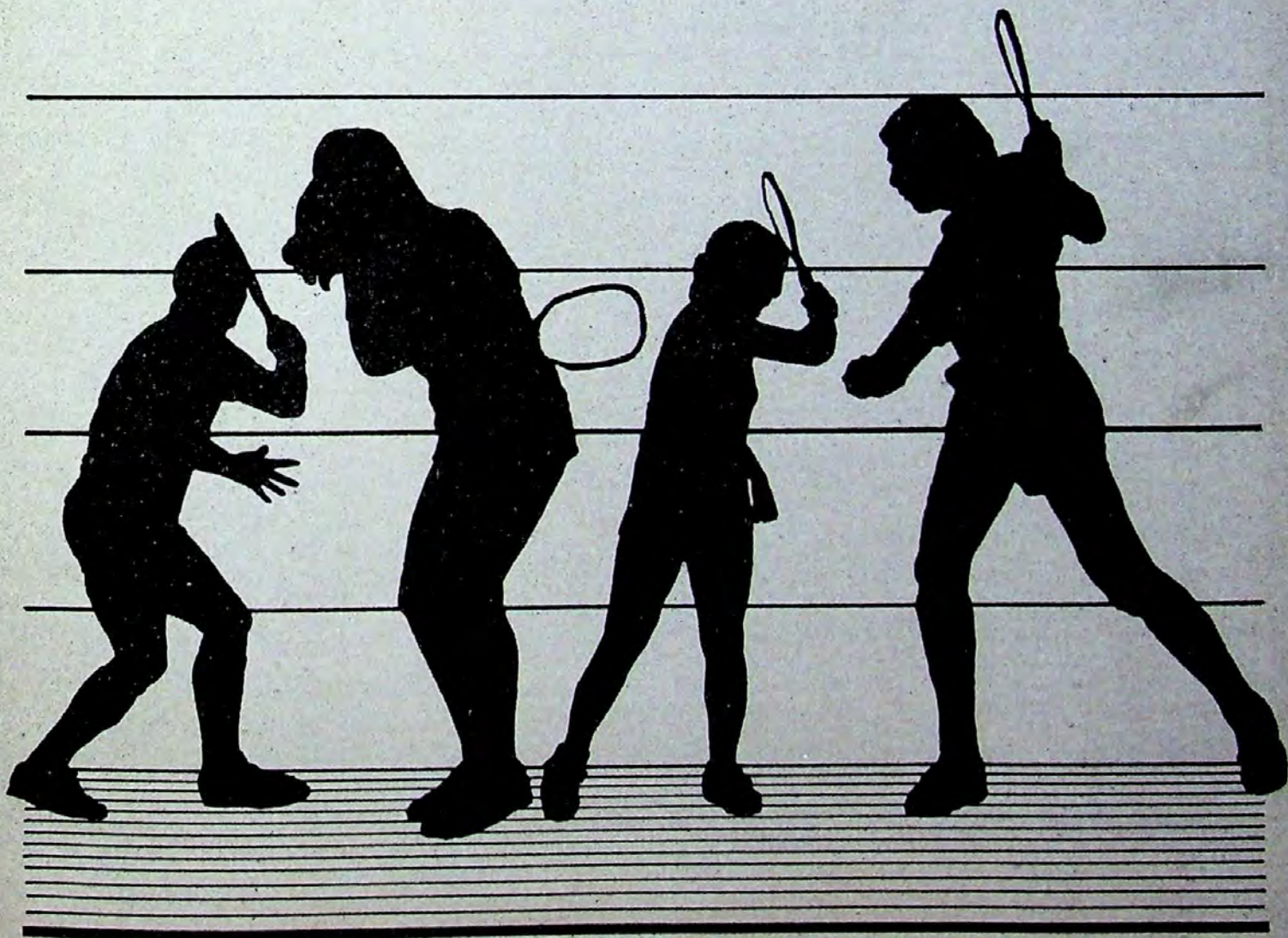
"In the old days, when everyone played a control game with passes and ceiling shots, it was said that there would never be a national

champion under six feet tall," recalls Steve Keeley, who is himself six-feet-tall and beginning his seventh year on the pro tour. "You had to reach for the ceiling constantly. But now, of course, all that has changed, and you have a shorter champion like Marty Hogan."

Keeley asks people to glance at a list of the top 10 professional players today. It reveals a preponderance of them are built close to the ground, theoretically making it easier for them to execute low shots.

"The ideal height is somewhere below 5-foot-10," says Steve Strandemo, a pro tour veteran who is 5-foot-8. "It's best to be lower to the ground at the high performance levels of the sport because the ball is always so low to the ground."

"Tall players either have to bend over or keep their knees bent and, after a couple of



SHORT VS. TALL

"In the old days, when everyone played a control game with passes and ceiling shots, it was said that there would never be a national champion under six feet tall."

games of squatting, you can get very tired. Look how long catchers last in baseball."

Strandemo, one of the more well-conditioned players in the game, thinks taller players go out of their way to get themselves in top shape to prepare for that extra strain on their legs as a result of having to keep their knees bent.

He discounts the advantage taller players have in reaching for ceiling shots, saying, "If the ball goes too high, it's going to come off the back wall anyway."

Davey Bledsoe, at six-foot-plus, knows what Strandemo is talking about. His height, he says, is more of a hindrance than a help to his game.

"In this game, you have to get down into the power zone," says Bledsoe, 1977 national champion. "As tall as I am, there's just no way that I can get down."

Bledsoe enjoys the reach advantage of being taller, but he also feels that his height causes him problems with foot faults.

"It takes me more room to serve," says Bledsoe. "Every one of my first serves used to be foot faults until I worked on that and corrected them."

Ironically, Bledsoe is known as one of the most powerful and accurate servers in racquetball as well as one of the game's quickest players.

Another great server is Jerry Hilecher, who attributes his ability to generate power from his long legs.

"My legs are the biggest part of my body," says the lean, six-foot Hilecher. "They give me the power to drive through the ball."

Since he is only 164 pounds, Hilecher gets more leverage and power from firmly planting his foot on the floor and swinging with his whole body.

"I'm not as powerfully built as someone like Hogan who can rely on his upper body strength alone," says Hilecher, "so I use the mass of my whole body."

Hilecher's retrieving ability would put a

cocker spaniel to shame. He is quick and agile. And his long arms are a big help to him when executing diving saves for which he is well known.

Another leggy competitor who is, perhaps, the quintessence of the tall racquetball player is amateur Charlie Garfinkel of Buffalo, N.Y. At six-foot-six, Garfinkel doesn't have to look up to anyone on the court and he says that his reach not only helps him with ceiling balls, but with passing shots as well.

"If I'm up front and my opponent doesn't roll the ball out on me," says Garfinkel, "I'm going to get it."

He, too, uses his legs to put power into his serves and rally shots but admits, "I'm at a disadvantage in the corners or when bending down for low shots."

Garfinkel thinks that quickness on the court is much more important in the pro ranks than reach. He adds, however, that height seems to have some bearing on speed since the shorter players also tend to be the quicker players.

"You look at me, for instance," says Garfinkel. "I've never been known as a runner. I have more of a lope."

Strandemo and Keeley agree with Garfinkel's assessment on the importance of quickness on a racquetball court. Both men place it first in importance as far as physical attributes go. Keeley, in fact, makes a further distinction between quickness and speed.

"It's not how fast a player runs the 100-yard dash that is important," says Keeley, "but how quickly he reacts to the ball."

"Guys like Yellen, Hogan and Wagner have explosive power because they are shorter and they are able to scurry around the court scooping up balls like chipmunks scoop up acorns."

At least one of those players takes issue with Keeley's description of him as a chipmunk.

"If you watch me play," says Rich Wagner, "I much more resemble a cockroach running around with short little steps."

Wagner, who is 5-foot-8 and 145 pounds, agrees that his smaller size contributes to his greater speed.

"I've given a lot of thought to that subject," he says. "A tall person has long strides and reach but, in racquetball, it's better to take short, quick steps. A big man can't change direction as quickly and get back into his coverage pattern after a shot the way a small man can."

Wagner thinks that the reach advantage is far outweighed by a shorter man's ability to stay close to the ground.

"Big guys have to use their leg muscles and back muscles more," he says.

That is, basically, an accurate assessment, according to Byron Wildermuth, a registered physical therapist and director of the Sports Injury Clinic in San Diego. An expert in the body mechanics of sports activity, Wildermuth identifies the quadriceps or large muscles in the thigh and the low back extensors as the muscles under greatest strain during a low racquetball shot.

"The ability of a player to get down low is really a question of his flexibility," says Wilder-

muth. "A tall player can get down low if he is flexible, but a shorter man is already there and, over a period of time, there will be more stress placed on the lower back of a player who has to do more bending."

Wildermuth sees a lot of lower back problems that could be easily avoided if the patient had a regular program of stretching.

"There is no reason why a tall player who maintains his flexibility cannot get as low for a racquetball shot as a shorter player," he says, "but he will have to do a little more work."

Balance is another physiological advantage for the shorter player, says Wildermuth.

"The center of gravity is located in the pelvis," he notes, "so the lower to the ground you are, the better balance you are going to have."

One player who seems to be overcoming his height "handicap" is tour rookie Scott Hawkins of Santa Clara, Calif. At 6-foot-2 and 150 pounds, Hawkins looks like a Hilecher who had been put on the rack and stretched a couple of extra inches. Put him in a dirty poncho and sombrero alongside Clint Eastwood and you could have a real spaghetti western.

But Hawkins didn't know that he was supposed to be a court cripple when he won a record-breaking four national junior titles last year. His legs, he says, are his best physical attribute because he has learned how to use them.

"My long stride and reach also help me with passing shots," says Hawkins. "Shorter players are easier to pass."

Even he, though, recognizes the drawbacks of his height and admits that life would be easier for him if he were built a little closer to the ground.

Dave Peck of El Paso, Tex., is a player who is built closer to the ground much the way a Sherman tank is built closer to the ground. They call him "The Ox."

"I'm the stockiest guy on the tour," admits the 5-foot-9, 190-pounder, "but it helps me a lot in terms of position."

"I can intimidate a lot of opponents. If I need a shot, my opponents usually give it to me."

When Peck plants himself in center court, it's a little like an oak tree putting down roots but, as Garfinkel points out, he also is deceptively quick and agile.

National finalist Mike Yellen, a 5-foot-10, 175-pound, 19-year-old says there are times when it doesn't hurt to be husky.

Although racquetball is ostensibly a non-contact sport, that doesn't mean that there isn't occasional bumping and jostling for position.

"I bumped into Wagner a couple of times

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SHORT VS. TALL

"There is no reason why a tall player who maintains his flexibility cannot get as low for a racquetball shot as a shorter player, but he will have to do a little more work."

last year," says Yellen. "He's so thin that I was afraid I had really hurt him."

But it's a different experience bumping into Marty Hogan. "He's built like a brick wall," says Yellen. "He could really hurt someone like Hilecher or Mike Zeitman."

Like most of the pros, Yellen emphasizes the importance of quickness on the court. He

says, however, he prefers to let other players do the running while he directs traffic with his control style of play. The best physical attribute, says Yellen, is a person's brain.

Another factor which relates to a player's height, says Wagner, is the speed of the ball. "A faster ball favors a smaller, quicker player who can play a power-oriented game with low kills and hard serves, says Wagner. A slower ball favors a control player who hits a lot of ceiling balls and passes.

One development in racquetball which several players alluded to is the advent of the so-called "true" athlete. Heretofore, some claim, racquetball has been a low-profile sport which has attracted only the marginally athletic while "true" athletes have gone on to the big money sports.

Of course, there are some notable exceptions to that rule, but several of the players themselves suggested that now that there is a little money being spread around in the sport, athletes with a lot more natural athletic ability will start rising out of the floorboards.

"Players such as those you see in the Coors All-Pro (other pro athletes) will eventually run circles around the pro players of today," predicts Keeley.

That may be true, but it's still going to be advantageous to be short, believes pro basketball player Randy Smith, who is one of those natural athletes who competed in the Coors All-Pro.

"I'd have to assume that you should be a little lower to the ground for racquetball," says

the 6-foot-3 Smith who has played the game off and on for eight years. But he also feels there is no handicap one can't overcome if you work at it.

"Derrek Dickey is 6-foot-8," says Smith, "but he can lean forward and get down as well as a player who is only 5-foot-8. I would have to conclude that, if you practice and perfect your game, you will be one of the best no matter how tall or short you are and no matter what sport you are in."

Smith has only to look as far as Gail Goodrich for living proof of his theory. At 6-foot-1, Goodrich has the worst of two worlds: He's tall for racquetball and considered a runt by basketball standards. However, he hasn't let that stop him on either court.

Considered one of the all-time great guards in basketball, Goodrich has reached the semis of the last two Coors All-Pro events. Predictably, his secret of success is his quickness.

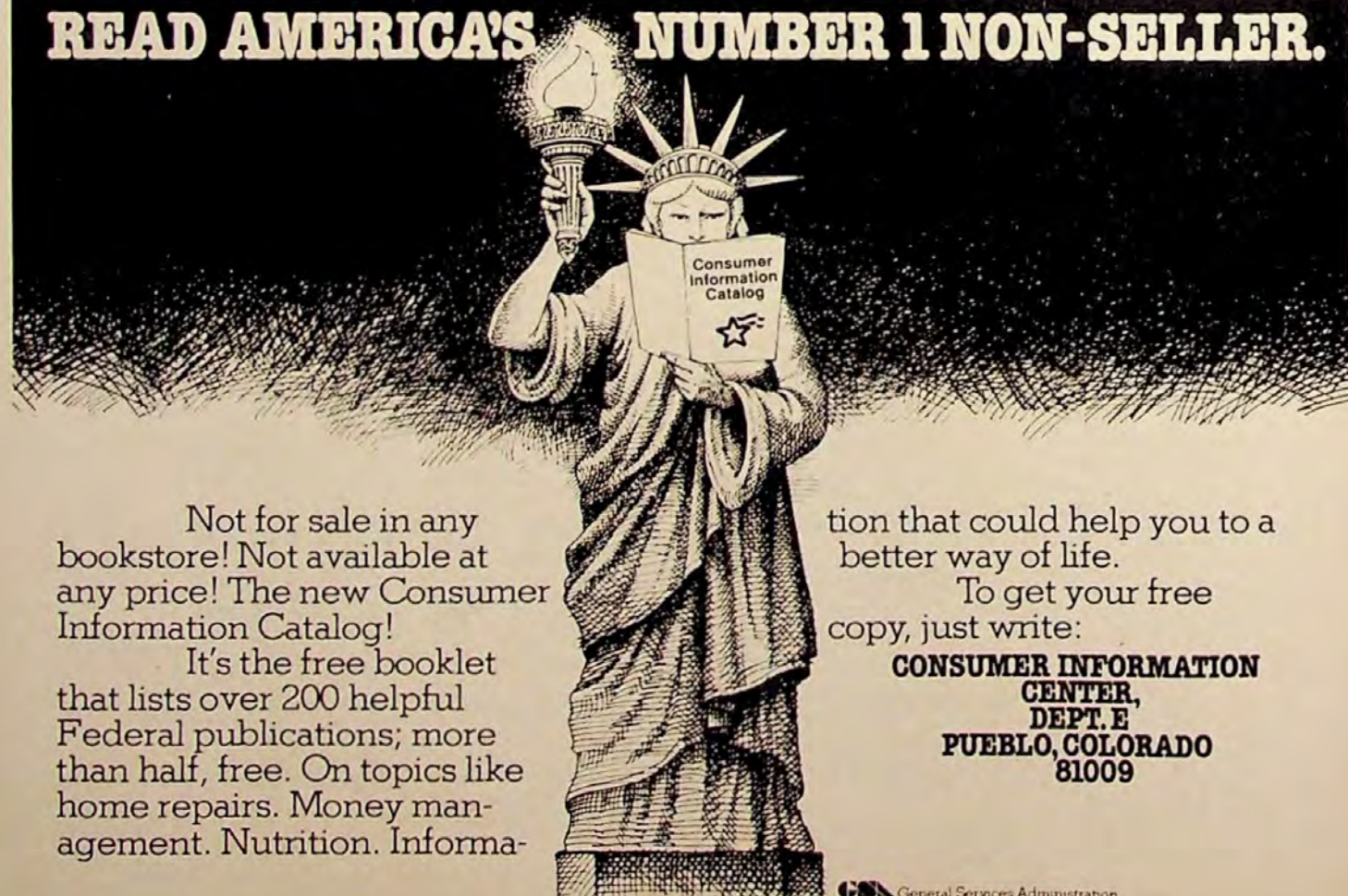
"I've had to compensate for my size by being quick," says Goodrich, "and, fortunately, I've been quicker than most players I've played against. Quickness is the greatest asset you can have in any sport."

That is a proposition to which most players would probably ascribe. In addition, quickness could be considered the great equalizer between short and tall. So, while most players consider it an advantage to be short in racquetball, that is no reason for any aspiring six-footers to pack it in.

Any sized player can be successful if he works at it.

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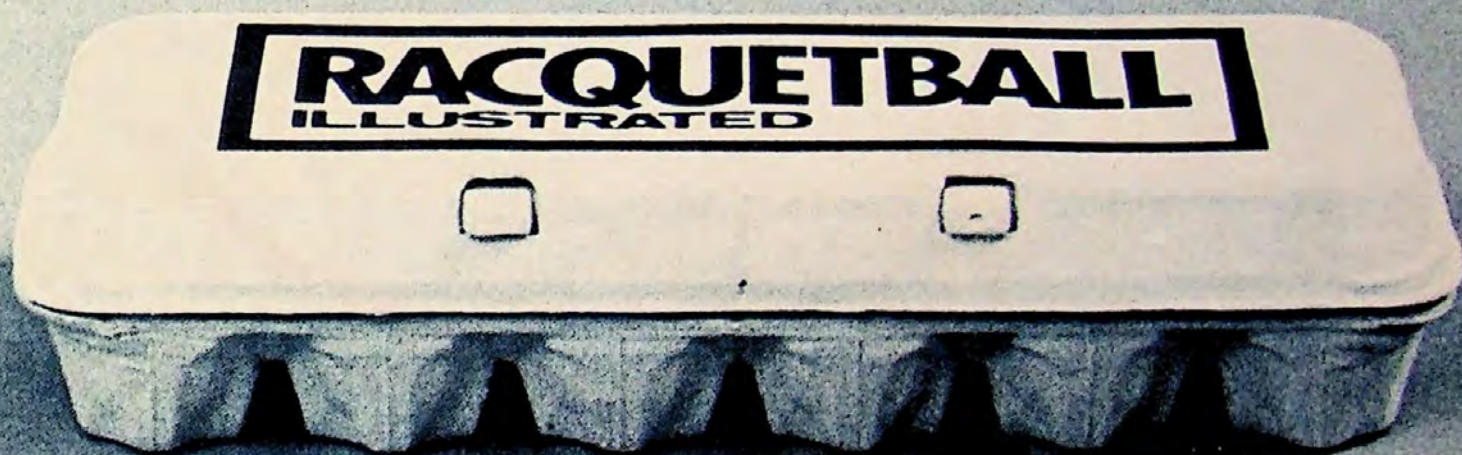
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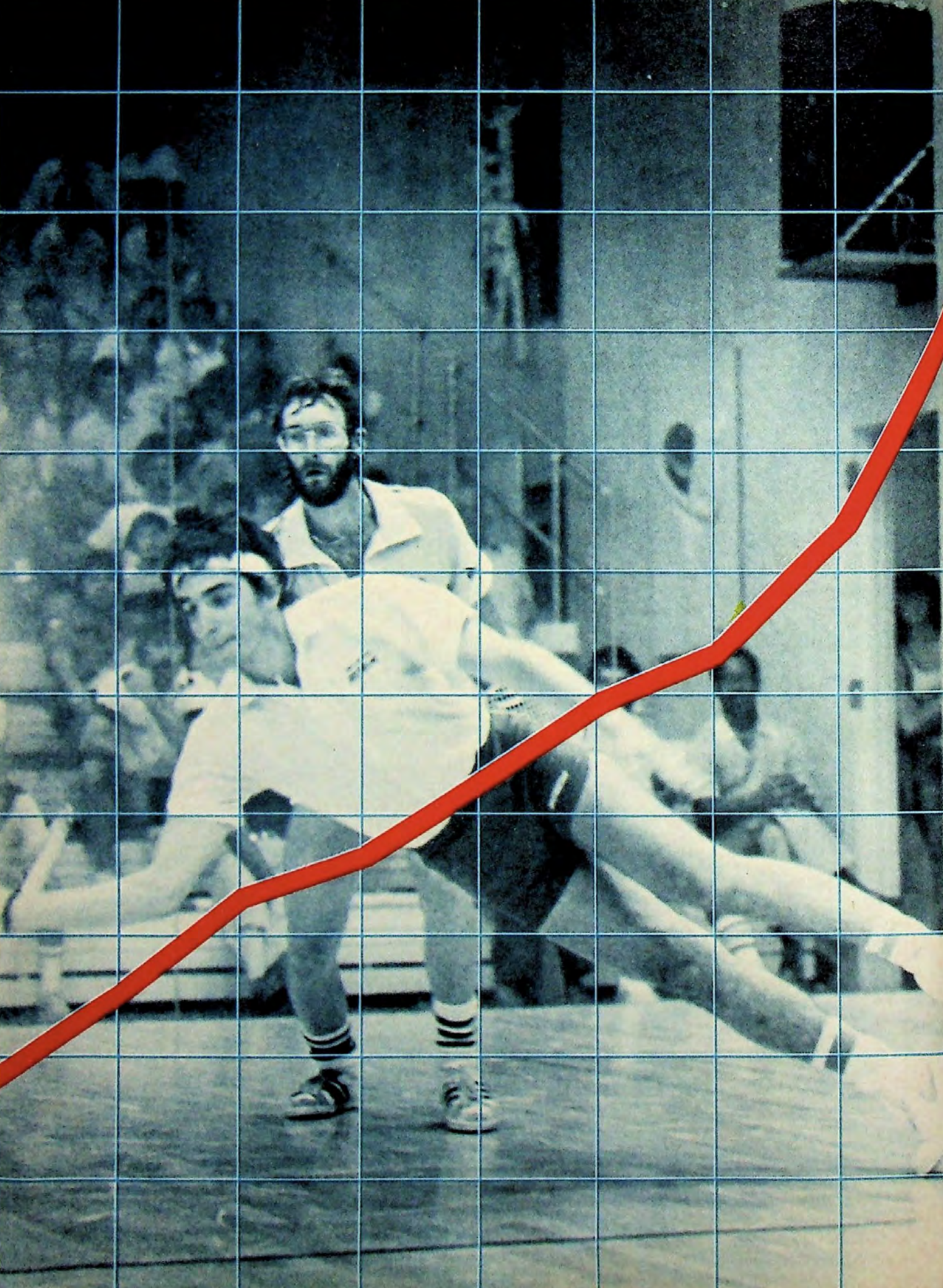
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The State Of The Sport

What was it like in '79 and where it is going in '80?

By Sandra Segal

Yogi Berra's Hall of Fame Racquetball Club was the first racquetball club to open in Fairfield, N.J. two years ago. In those two years, the owners saw the club soar to 4,000 members. But in those same two years they saw 15 to 20 clubs open within a 25 mile radius. One of the owners, Charles Muscarelli, wants to open another club, but knows he must be cautious. "Two years ago you could have opened up a club anywhere in New Jersey and not have to worry," he said. "It's a whole different situation now."

Since court owners and builders are the first to feel any change in racquetball's popularity, what Muscarelli said in many ways reflects the overall situation in racquetball. Although its growth continues to be extraordinarily rapid—the latest Nielson survey shows participation in racquetball up 283% in the period from 1976 to 1979, making it the fastest growing participant sport in the U.S.—those involved in the racquetball marketplace are beginning to sense that the growth is not quite as extraordinary as it was.

Jerry Sweeney is one of the owners of Wallbanger Court Clubs, one of the largest chain of court operators in the U.S. He feels that 1979

The State Of The Sport

has not been an unqualified success for racquetball builders. "There's no doubt that the number of players was up this year," Sweeney said, "But the number of courts went up much faster." Sweeney claims that the popularity of racquetball—and the parallel overbuilding—have reached such a balance this year that by knowing the population of an area and the number of other court clubs in the vicinity he can immediately tell if any given club is succeeding or failing.

Sweeney sees the overall court construction situation in the U.S. as one of narrowing possibilities. "There are five areas that are completely saturated," he said. "The South Bay, Orange County, and San Diego in California and the Chicago and Detroit areas in the Midwest. Although the East Coast has become a big area for construction, we know of clubs in New Jersey that are already in dire trouble. There are pockets in the Southwest, and in Seattle where building will continue for a while. But if you have any ideas about building in San Jose or San Diego—forget it."

Wallbanger Court clubs is beginning to turn away from further construction. "We are researching new areas for opening clubs," Sweeney said. "But now we're thinking more about acquiring already constructed clubs than building new ones. So far we have looked at 250 clubs in the Western U.S. that are in trouble."

Most court owners agree that an entrepreneur can no longer erect a club almost

anywhere, open the doors, and wait for the players—and dollars—to roll in. The key word now is location, and construction magnates are searching for those pockets of undeveloped, prime racquetball territory the way Exxon looks for oil fields. Kenneth Andrews of Racquet Time Courts, a chain of 13 clubs mainly in California and the Midwest, is looking at spots in the Southeast, East, and Midwest for possible court locations. Although 1979 has been profitable for his already existing courts, he admitted that, in general, a court owner's return on investments can now vary from 0 to 40%, depending on location.

Dan Seaton, commissioner of the Womens Pro Racquetball Association (WPRA) and a court club owner, feels that while his own club in Las Vegas is doing well, potential new builders will have to look further afield. "The market is just right in Las Vegas," he said. "There probably shouldn't be another court club here." But Seaton has a novel suggestion for locating new court clubs: "You have to go into the small towns with 35-50,000 population. A few years ago a court club started in Carson City. They began with six courts, then added four, and just this year added six more. They have 90 per cent occupancy. All over the country you can find hundreds of smaller cities ripe for court clubs. It's an untapped market."

But Sweeney is more pessimistic. "There's no way you can open a club in a town that size. For each court club you open, we figure you need between 7 and 10,000 people within a five mile radius. In a small town you could only open a three and a half court facility, and that just won't do it."

Despite these warnings of rocky roads ahead, few owners feel that construction of new courts is slowing drastically. Some owners attribute the slowdowns that did occur in 1979 to the high interest rates which make it more difficult and expensive to get money for investments. Muscarelli said, "It's because of the money situation that growth is not as fast. If money were cheaper, people wouldn't slow down at all."

Since the number of courts available is closely related to the number of people who

"The market's growing—but not at the rates it was in the past."

can play, any slowdown of court growth will eventually effect the manufacturers of racquetball equipment. Al Mackie, president of Seamco, one of the major manufacturers of racquetballs, explained, "The addition of court clubs and expansion of existing clubs is the bottom line for a manufacturer. The number of courts dictates how much business a manufacturer can do."

Mackie feels that although the builders are already starting to see overdevelopment in the east, the manufacturers are just beginning to mine this area, and this new market will delay any projected slowdowns. This past year Seamco has begun to aggressively market eastern areas largely ignored before, and Mackie says they have shown a significant increase of profits in 1979 over 1978.

Bud Held, president of Ektelon, one of the largest racquet manufacturers, agreed that the development of markets in New England, the Eastern seaboard and Texas is just beginning

"There's no doubt that the number of players was up this year. . . . But the number of courts went up much faster."

76

In a survey of U.S. Households conducted by the A.C. Nielsen Company, participation in racquetball is up 283 per cent from 1976-79, prompting Nielsen to call it the "nation's hottest sport."

79

to become important. Nevertheless, Held sees warning signs that the market is beginning to slacken. "We had an annual doubling of growth up until two years ago," Held said. "1978 showed an 80% increase over 1977. 1979 is showing a 35% increase over last year, and we predict that 1980 will increase only about 20% over 1979."

John Weaver, spokesperson for Leach Industries, the other large racquet manufacturer, had a similar response. "The market's growing—but not at the rates it was in the past. We are starting to tap the Eastern market, and that should help us for three years or so. But in five to ten years the market will be static."

This picture isn't as grim as it sounds. Held explained that though the growth rate is slowing down, there are still three to four million new players each year. No one need worry that the big companies will go out of business. And any fears that the price of equipment may go down as the demand slows are likewise unfounded. Most companies are developing even more sophisticated and expensive equipment as players become more experienced and demanding. Extelon has developed a new \$80.00 racquet which will hit the market next year. Leach is currently carrying the most expensive racquet on the market—the Graphite 100, retailing for \$125.00. Seamco is now selling a new type of racquetball—the dimpled Assassin—for an amazing \$7.00 a can.

The businessmen's analysis of the racquetball marketplace makes its future seem straightforward and predictable. The formula has been repeated for many sports: A new sport becomes popular, enters a period of immense growth, saturates the market, and finally stabilizes. But there's still one unknown in the racquetball formula that could make the sport redouble virtually overnight. The unknown quantity is national television, the greatest marketing tool of our time. The question is: When will America sit back with a beer and a bowl of popcorn to watch a game of pro racquetball?

No one doubts the effect of television on a sport. Seaton says it simply: "When television hits, it's not growth anymore, it's a plain explosion."

Take the recent example of women's golf. Even though the pro golfers were making slow steady progress, their yearly purse before television was never more than \$300,000. Then came an aggressive promotional campaign to bring women's golf to television. Last year their purse was four and one half million dollars.

Seaton believes that the same scenario will be played for racquetball. "I've talked to people in the television industry, and they say there needs to be 15 to 20 million participants in a sport before it can go on television. Product sponsors want at least that many viewers before they'll buy advertising time. We're a little over half that now, and we're getting closer all the time," said Seaton.

Robert Kendler, President of the National Racquetball Club (NRC) which runs the national pro tour, is even more optimistic about the sport's forthcoming entry into television land. "If I don't get racquetball on TV soon I'll

eat your hat," he declared. Kendler says that a portable glass racquetball court has been perfected, a development which most observers agree is of major importance in bringing the sport to television. Kendler also pointed out that television has already begun to discover racquetball. A tournament in Boise, Ida. was televised by the over 200 PBS stations in 1979.

The eagerness for television coverage does not mean that pro racquetball is stagnating without it. In fact, this past year has seen a continuation of pro racquetball's strong, steady growth. Leach pro Charlie Brunfield recalled, "Prize money for the champion has risen from \$1,000 a few years ago to \$12,000 this year in the Nationals, and the number of tournaments has jumped from three to twenty

this year." Although this prize money is still small in comparison with that for tennis and golf, many players feel that this too could change without the benefit of television. To achieve this monetary growth, people are beginning to look for sponsors outside of the NRC, which has a reputation for being rather conservative both in promoting the event and in procuring attractive purses.

Pro Steve Strandemo, for example, mentioned that College Marketing Research, a subsidiary of Playboy, is currently proposing tournaments which will have a \$50,000 purse, substantially more than NRC's average of about \$25,000 per tourney. The WPRA is also trying to find new sponsors for an all-women's tournaments. Janell Marriott, president of the WPRA, reported that Andrea Nail Color, a sub-

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The State Of The Sport

sidiary of Jean Naté, has already agreed to sponsor a tournament in New York in January 1980. The prize money will be \$10,000, a healthy increase over prize money for women at most NRC tournaments last year.

The WPRA's search for non-NRC sponsors is intended not merely to increase the women's purse, but to assure more equitable treatment for women in all aspects of the pro tournaments. Marriott said that in NRC tournaments "women players essentially take a back seat to men—we have the worst courts or the worst playing hours."

This effort to find sponsors—preferably generous ones—who believe that supporting racquetball will help them sell their products—is ultimately the effort that is needed to bring racquetball on television. The evidence that companies are beginning to consider racquetball a good marketing vehicle is now appearing in television commercials with a racquetball theme. Racquetball has been used as a setting in commercials for Diet Pepsi, Sego, and English Leather among others. Susan Blecker, director of the marketing campaign for Pretty Feet and Hands, says that the rac-

"When television hits, it's not growth anymore, it's a plain explosion."

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quetball commercial for this product has had excellent results. The commercial, which began running in September 1978, will be used next year as well, and Blecker says she is considering developing new commercials with the racquetball theme. Would Pretty Feet and Hands be interested in buying commercial time on televised pro racquetball games? "It's a possibility," Blecker said, "although there's still the problem that the games have more men than women playing, and women are our target audience."

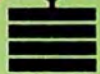
Beer companies, whose target audience is broader—the 25 to 40 year old drinkers—seems to be a more likely candidate for sponsoring televised racquetball. Coors has an excellent record as a racquetball sponsor. The company has been responsible for a pro-stop in the NRC national tour for two years and the \$250,000 all-pro tournament for athletes in other sports. Natural Light has also been heavily involved in racquetball tournament and exhibition promotion.

Will this further penetration into national awareness, whether on commercials, or televised pro matches, put a racquet into the hands of every able bodied American? Weaver of Leach wouldn't put it quite so strongly, but he did admit, "Things will change radically when racquetball is on television. There will be that much more awareness of racquetball, and the more people play, the more they buy." Strandemo, a bit less cautious, leans more to the point of view that one need only be introduced to racquetball to become a convert. He firmly declared, "Sure racquetball has tremendous room to grow. When racquetball hits television we'll really get going. Why there are people all around you that don't even know it exists."



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The world of racquetball according to Mark Twain

How would Mark Twain have viewed the game? One writer tries to put himself in Twain's sardonic shoes.

By Steven L. Stern

At least once a month, my uncle used to impress upon me that "there are two kinds of people in this world: Those who *watch* and those who *do*," and that Life's participants "really have it" over Life's spectators. Since he spent most of his 72 years directing funerals, I'm not sure my uncle actually knew what "it" was. But let that pass. He was always of the do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do school anyhow.

Conditioned by my uncle's good advice, I'm very sensitive to daily choices between participating and watching, between getting involved and just laying back. Fortunately, in most cases the way to go is clear.

Take eating for instance. What borderline sane person would choose to *watch* someone else devour Luigi's Anchovy-Pepperoni Special rather than participate first hand in its annihilation?

In other situations the choice is made for you. Sure I would share a pillow with a Playmate of the Month, but it's unlikely the opportunity will soon arise. So what can I do? Tack the centerfold to the wall, sigh longingly, and be a spectator.

Sometimes, though, there's a genuine dilemma. Racquetball is one such case. With seven quintillion forms of physical exercise available, would my life truly be lacking if I never ventured onto a racquetball court?

In a sense, I've already been a racquetball spectator for some time. These days one can hardly avoid it. Experts on such matters have joyously dubbed racquetball The Fastest Growing Sport in the Country (a title bestowed every two months), and proclaim that there are already six to eight million players. This racquet-swinging multitude is playing in an estimated seven or eight hundred clubs, so at any given time one may be sharing the showers with some ten thousand co-enthusiasts.

Scores of national and regional publications have hailed racquetball as the successor to tennis, running, and spousebeating. There are some fifteen instructional books on the market, all with the same title, and all overflowing with intricate diagrams of dotted lines and zinging arrows. Racquetball has even bounced its way into television shows and aftershave commercials, and onto breakfast cereal boxes.

And nary a town in the nation, it seems, doesn't have a roadside sign warning of the imminent opening of THE NEW, SPACIOUS

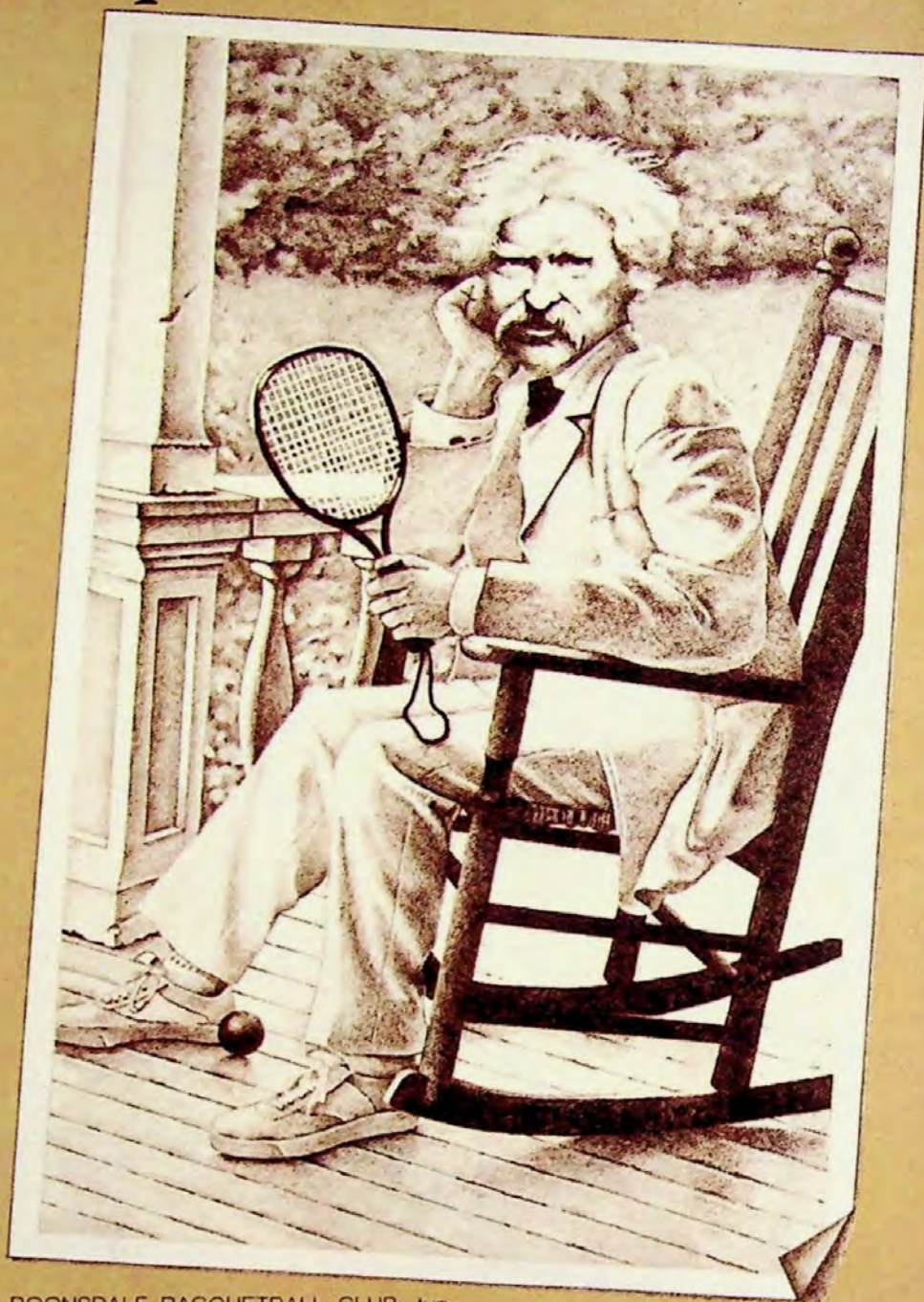
BOONSDALE RACQUETBALL CLUB, typically boasting several courts, a health club, swimming pool, sauna, nursery, and body and fender shop. Indeed, if just the wood used in making these countless "coming soon" signs had been turned into building material, somewhere in this country we'd have a racquet club the size of St. Louis.

After withstanding months of such bombardment, I found my spectator-or-participant decision point was at hand last week. The astutely named Main Street Racquet Club, two miles from my home and located next door to the China Wall Restaurant, announced its Grand Opening (after enduring 21 months of promises, who expected an opening that would be anything less?). And for those of us fortunate enough to find the brown-and-yellow handouts wedged into our front door and jammed under our wiper blades, there was to be "an exhibition match between two leading

players, followed by a free introductory lesson." It was an irresistible opportunity: The price and location were unbeatable, and if the evening were a washout, I could always bring home some China Wall spareribs.

The Main Street Racquet Club, whose enormous multicolored NOW OPEN! declaration is no doubt visible for 100 miles in all directions, consists of a large, rectangular parking lot with a squarish, orange-red brick building set at one end. When I arrived, this parking lot was filled very nearly to capacity, though inside the club, there were considerably fewer people than number of cars. I can't explain this, except to guess that some of the more dexterous individuals drove over in two cars, an admittedly unlikely proposition.

In any case, the interior of the building contains eight racquetball courts, four on each side as you come in, giving the appearance of



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Twain

an ultramodern low-security prison block. Each of the courts consists of three off-white walls, and a clear-glass back wall intended for game observation and window shopping.

When I entered the club, several courts were already in use, and the sounds of balls bouncing, racquets clacking, and bodies bruising reverberated everywhere. I imagine anyone accustomed to the cobbler's trade felt right at home with the din. For myself, I began to suspect racket club might be a more appropriate designation.

Separating the two rows of adjoining courts, and forming in effect a spacious aisle, is the "lounge." This area is tastefully decorated with three bright plaid couches, an imitation fireplace with "logs" that do not touch the ground, four blindingly orange end tables buried under membership information pamphlets, a gleaming coin-operated fruit juice machine that hums, and a 19-inch Sony color television turned up to volcanic decibel level. If Dr. Frankenstein had a waiting room, it would have looked like this.

I was beginning to contemplate my craving for spareribs, when a voice like that of a river boat pilot in a hurricane commanded us to Court 4, where the exhibition match was about to commence. The spectators who had been clustered about the various occupied courts immediately converged on the appointed court, and in a matter of seconds the once-clear glass surface was gaily smeared with noseprints, finger streaks, and mouth exhaust.

Priding myself on my powers of observation, I quickly discerned that what everyone in the surrounding throng was pushing to get a view of was thus far still an empty court. This information circulated rapidly, and soon the spectators began scanning the horizon for some sign of a Person In Charge.

We hadn't long to wait. The mysterious P.I.C. turned out to be none other than the commander with the river boat voice. As is so often the case, this young man looked nothing at all as you'd expect from his resonant, authoritative sound. He had curly blond hair, stood 5-foot-10 and sported a smile that had all the sincerity of a peddler selling powdered unicorn horn. He was wearing a brand-new "Main Street Racquet Club" T-shirt, orange shorts (to match the end tables?), along with a head band, a wrist band, and a knee bandage. He looked as though he'd just been assembled from a kit.

The commander proceeded to explain how the game is played, what equipment is needed, and of course, why racquetball is The Fastest Growing Sport in the Country. He recited several inspired choruses of "it's fast, fun, easy, and cheap, tra-la"—a description that applies as well to popping corn—and then distributed yellow handouts, which depicted a racquetball court as the usual series of lines and arrows and simplified the game's rules to six sentences, each 85 words in length.

The commander next introduced his partner—"this is my partner"—whose name, Ek-

telon, was emblazoned on every article of clothing he wore. Ek was a heavily tanned 6-foot-3 with hands and feet like a Rodin sculpture, and only a trifle more brain power. He grinned benevolently at his admirers, scratched his underarm, and then led the way onto the court. The commander checked his bands and bandages, tightened his nuts and bolts, and followed through the heavy glass door.

What ensued was about twenty minutes of frantic dashing, painful twisting, and profuse perspiring, as the commander and Ek alternately struck the ball, the walls, and each other. Though no one in the audience knew what the score was, or even whether there was a score, everyone was audibly impressed by the vigor of the competition.

I must admit it was an enjoyable demonstration to observe. The skill required to hit the ball soundly, let alone select its direction, was evident. And certainly the dynamic pace of the contest generated a contagious excitement.

I'd be hard put to single out the superior player. The commander was a blur on the court, and as long as he kept his mind on his opponent and not on the spectators, his twanging racquet strokes had deadly accuracy.

Ek, whose towering size made him slower and less graceful than his opponent, was nevertheless able to propel the ball with riflelike force into whichever corner the commander was farthest from. Such consistent marksman placement, coupled with the fact that Ek's bullets rarely rose higher than two inches from the ground, made the match a grueling tug-of-war affair.

When the game ended, the two players laughed, shook hands, and emerged from the court to hearty applause. The commander was sweating Mississippi rivulets, and Ek's tanned face had taken on a decidedly rose cast. Both were breathless, and the commander was rubbing a red mark on his leg where Ek had sniped him.

One of the spectators asked what the final score had been, to which Ek replied: "21-19, my game, but it was close all the way." This gracious response sent the commander into an immediate limp, as if to attribute his loss to an old war wound.

The two then went off to shower, leaving behind instructions to "sign up at the desk for your free lesson." Most of the spectators moved obediently to the sign-up sheet, while the rest ambled off to view the locker room facilities. Being of the belief that one locker room is much like another, I chose to add my name to the list, purchase a grapefruit juice, and wait for the commander's return. (In truth, I was not so much moved by sudden thirst, as I was attracted to a long-haired young woman at the juice machine.)

A short while later, the commander and Ek reappeared, this time both clad in "Main Street Racquetball Club" T-shirts (orange) and matching shorts. They retrieved the sign-up sheets from the desk and tallied up about three dozen signatures. The commander explained that "Tod" (Ektelon did have a first name after all) and he would each take six

people at a time into one of the courts for a fifteen-minute "mini-lesson." Since there were only three groups of twelve people in all, no one would have to wait more than a half hour.

The commander then began reading off names, and the first six people were given racquets and sent away with Tod. My name came up as number 12, so I made it into the first of the commander's groups. This pleased me immensely, not only because I hate to wait, but also because Barbara, the long-haired fruit juice woman, was the lovely number 11.

Carrying a bucket of balls, the commander led us onto a court where, with my first racquetball racquet clenched snugly in hand, I lined up with my five co-pupils. The three men and two women seemed as eager as I to—at last—participate.

The lesson, unfortunately, was about as exciting as a frog croak and lasted not much longer. After the frenzy of the exhibition match, five minutes of talk followed by ten minutes of leisurely bounce-and-hit seemed frustratingly dull.

At least it did to me. Several of my companions were clearly thrilled by the feel of racquet striking ball, whether or not the ball actually traveled anywhere. Having on many occasions dabbled in squash and tennis, I was too anxious to *taste* this new sport to be content with merely sniffing at it. Nevertheless, the opportunities I had to swat the ball, limited though they were, were sufficient to stimulate my interest in the game and give rise to a few observations.

If the squash racquet is the musket of racquet sports, the racquetball racquet is certainly the pistol. And after experiencing the liveliness of a racquetball, I have doubts about ever again playing with that lethargic pellet known as a squashball.

Tennis, on the other hand, although a sport with much to recommend it, lacks the hand-to-hand combat aspect that flavors racquetball. And while the tennis swing requires a swordsman's sweeping arm motion, the racquetball stroke is a sharp snap more akin to a boxer's lightning jab.

So perhaps the brief introductory lesson accomplished what it was intended to. All six of us left the court smiling and eager to play again. The commander too was smiling, and tiny dollar signs beamed in his eyes.

I'm certain that most of the visitors—myself included—will return to the club. The sport has many things going for it, not the least of which is its capacity for letting you strike back unabashedly, in the privacy of your own court, at bullying employer, tiresome mother-in-law, unwelcome house guest, sadistic stock brokers, or anyone else whose face appears on the ball.

When I left the Main Street Racquetball Club, I was in high spirits. True to my uncle's counsel, I was now a participant, not just a spectator. I had had new experiences, had learned some things, had generally enjoyed myself for an hour or two, and had found a fresh activity to pursue.

And perhaps most delightful of all was my discovery that Barbara, too, was a fan of China Wall spareribs.



INSTRUCTION GUIDE



1.

Forehand by Jay Jones

2.

Backhand by Lynn Adams

3.

Serving by Victor I. Spear, M.D.

4.

Positioning by Janell Marriott

5.

Service Returns by Jennifer Harding and Jean Sauser

6.

Kill Shots by Dave Peck

7.

Ceiling Shots by Jack Kramer

8.

Wallpaper Shots by Jerry Hilecher

9.

The Other Hand by Dave Bledsoe

10.

How To Practice by Victor I. Spear, M.D.

1 FOREHAND

By Jay Jones

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 your 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 the 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's movement is concerned, you should think of yourself as a puppet 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 1½ 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 comes 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 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 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

Jones shows the basic forehand stroke and how it compares to the motion of skipping a rock or ball across a lake. Players should note Jones' arm is bent, the butt of the racquet is facing in the direction of the ball, the knee is bent and the body weight is leaning into the ball. At contact, the ball is hit off the heel of the lead foot and the wrist is snapped on impact.



right-handed player) coming in and then planting that inside rear corner. That rear foot is what gives you proper balance for the rest of the stroke.

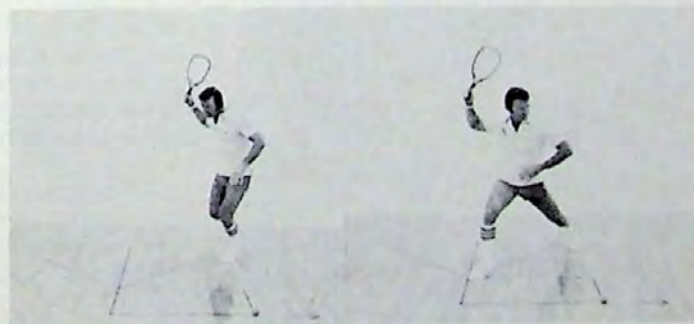
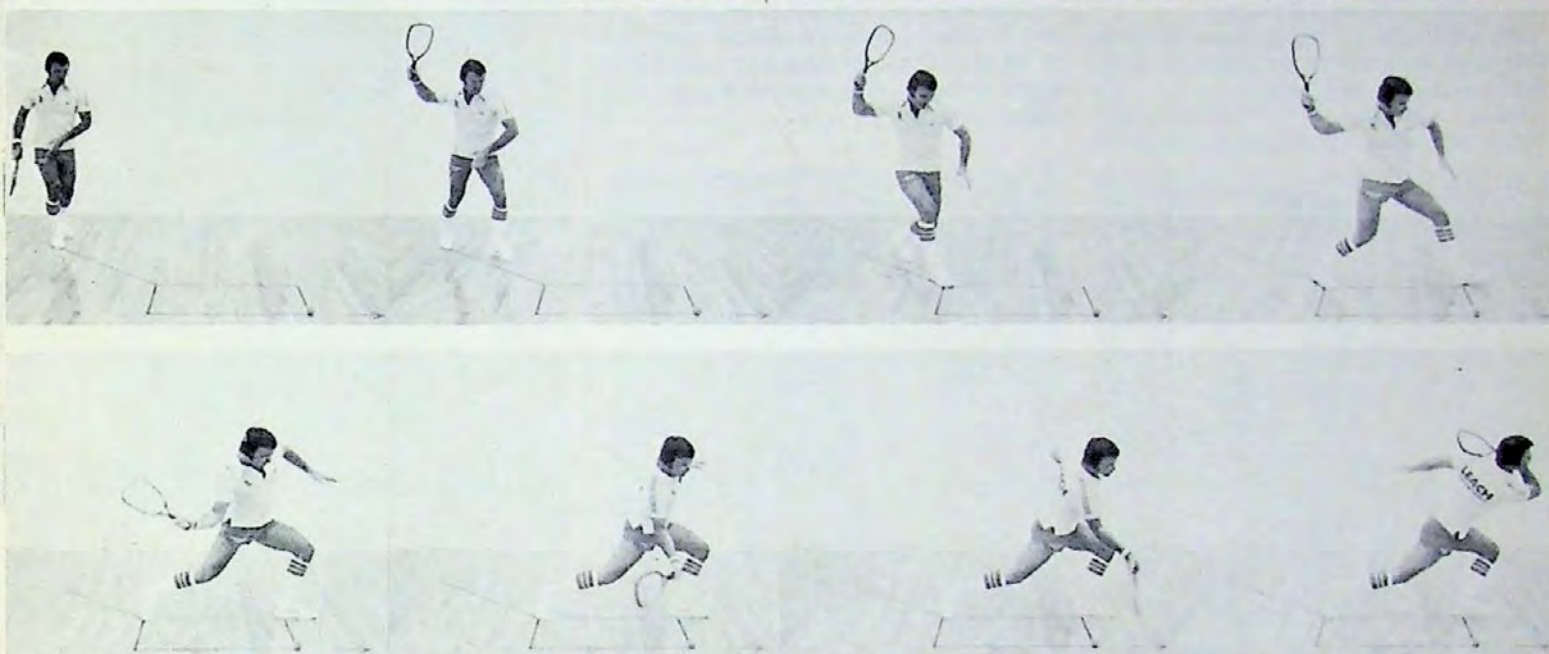
Ideally, you want to contact the ball with a flat racquet head.

What we have just talked about is the regu-

lar forehand—the one you use if you have a setup; 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 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



In this photo sequence, Jones shows the approach to hitting the ball in conjunction with his box theory. The right foot (for a right-handed player) should be on the rear inside corner. The left foot is on the front inside corner. The ball should be hit $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 feet away from the body (outside front corner) and the racquet will pass over the rear outside corner. Note how follow through touches shoulder. Jones is also showing that no matter what direction you approach from, right foot is always placed on rear inside corner.



Jones shows that box theory is always with you no matter which direction you want ball to travel. Your right foot is still on imaginary inside rear corner and ball is still on outside front corner.

FOREHAND

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.

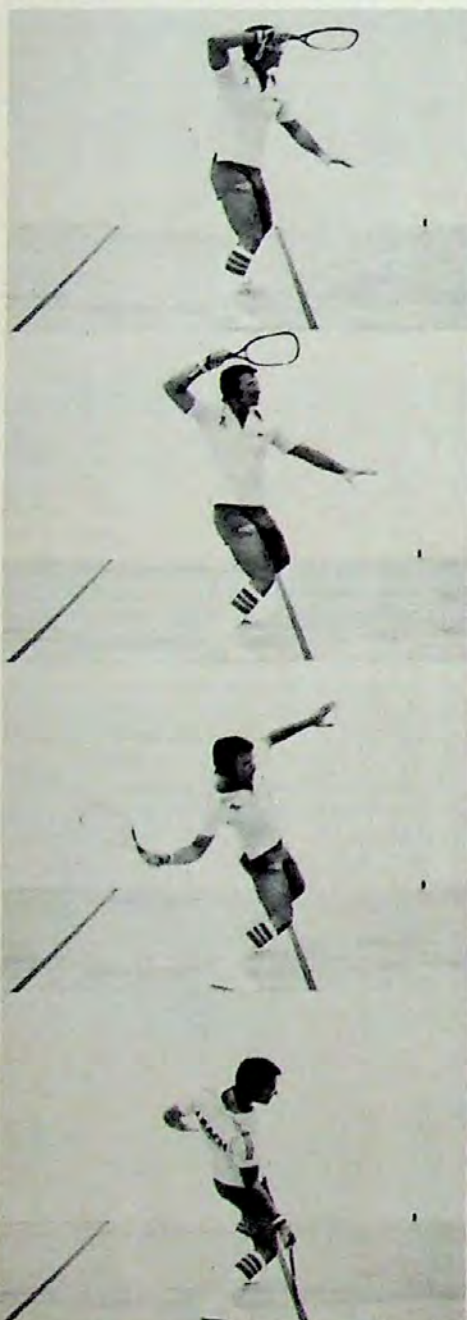
Study the photos on these pages. Note the differences between the quick-thinking forehand shot and the set-up shot.

Also study the box theory. Note the placement of the ball and its relationship to the front

foot. Also note the approach to the box. The ball is still in the same spot, no matter which direction I am coming from.

Finally, note the similarities between the movement of the basic forehand, using a ball or rock instead of a racquet.

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.



In the quick action forehand (front and side view), when you don't have time to set up, Jones recommends an underhanded whipping motion. The ball is hit with the weight on the back foot.

2 BACKHAND



By Lynn Adams

When I was asked to do an instructional article on the backhand, I was informed that the article should take everyone "back to the basics."

Sometimes we all get caught up in the big power stroke, really slugging the ball to the wall, and consequently losing a lot of control in the process.

Now, I hope no one is turned off by the word control because you can hit the ball just as hard if you use correct arm, shoulder, leg and wrist motions. It takes practice and patience but in the end, you'll find it is worth it.

Whenever one attempts a new stroke, whether it be a forehand, backhand or serve, you should remember not to overload your brain with too many things at once. Out of 10 different components to a certain stroke, you should pick out, let's say, two that you can handle fairly well. You should become comfortable with those two aspects of the stroke before you move on. You'll learn the stroke much quicker this way and, in the end, your stroke will be much closer to perfection.

To begin the backhand stroke, first of all, check your grip. Your grip is essential for a

flat, parallel racquet face, which will send your shot straight into the wall.

Grip your racquet with the same handshake hold as you do your forehand, only (if you are a right-hander) shift your hand slightly to the left.

Now, think of your backswing. Your body should be facing the side wall. Now rotate your shoulders, so they are facing the back wall. At this time, your wrist should be cocked.

There are two ways to cock your wrist. One is to have your wrist cocked in line with your forearm. I personally prefer this position because it leads to better consistency. The second way is to curl your wrist back. This gives off more of a whipping action, which

allows for a more powerful hit, but it requires precise and expert timing.

Then we come to the backhand swing. You should concentrate on your body moving forward through your swing. As you start to bring your arm and wrist down into the ball, your legs are bending forward, your shoulders are moving forward and your forearm is moving forward, letting your body help you make the shot. If all your momentum is carried forward with the ball, you will be able to hit the ball with much more force and accuracy than if you lean back on your stroke.

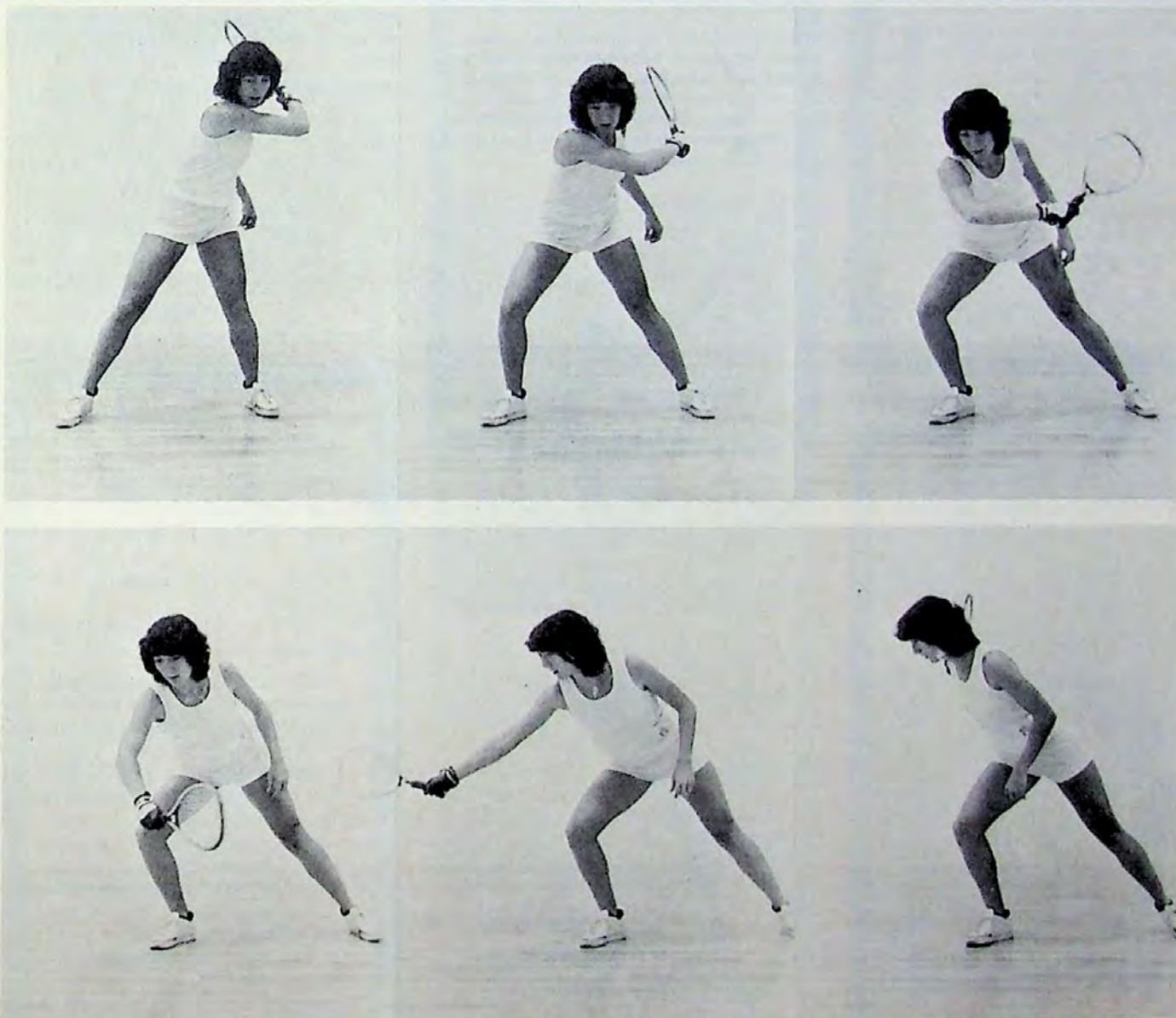
Keep your elbow fairly close to your body and rotate your shoulder towards the front wall. Make sure you keep your wrist firm

after it has snapped through the ball. If you let your racquet roll over, your shots will head towards the floor, not the wall.

After hitting the ball, you want your follow through to travel as straight as possible. A high follow through will result in shots coming up high in the front wall. A level swing and follow through will result in a level shot.

These are the basics of the backhand stroke. But there are a few other things to think about. Little quirks that come up time and again. Little bad habits you should try and overcome.

The two most common backhand errors are holding the racquet with two hands (left over from your tennis days, probably), and bending at the waist instead of the knees.



In demonstrating the basic backhand stroke, Adams begins her stroke at shoulder level and moves it around in a relatively straight line with the follow through ending up straight out. Note how the knees are bent as she moves into the shot. This differs from the power backhand which has a pendulum motion.

BACKHAND

The first problem is fairly easy to overcome. I had a problem with this one myself, at first. What you need to do is hold two racquetballs in your free hand, thus inhibiting that hand to grab and pull the racquet back. If you eliminate the second hand, you'll be able to rotate your shoulders properly, and bring your racquet back to its proper position.

The second problem may take a little more time to work at. But remember you will only be helping your game. By bending your knees you will enable yourself to get down lower on the ball, thereby raising your percentages of killing it.

In the beginning, your legs may be sore from stretching places not previously stretched. But view this as a positive hurt. It means you are bending properly, not at your waist. This will ultimately lead to a stronger, more consistent backhand.

Again, I advise you to concentrate on one or two things at a time and progress only when comfortable with each stage of your stroke.

The easiest way to drill yourself is to first just drop the ball and hit it. When this feels comfortable, toss the ball off the side wall, then the back wall. Later you can start to rally

with yourself, now that you are in total control of the stroke.

I'll tell you it sure feels good to work towards a goal and then accomplish it. But you must have patience and perseverance and then success will come.



The grips: On the forehand, the V (the point on the web between your thumb and forefinger) is on the right ridge of the top of your racquet. With the backhand stroke, says Adams, your hand moves slightly to the left, almost putting the V on the top left ridge of the racquet.



The Wrongs: Adams notes three things not to do. You should not take your racquet back with two hands. You also should not hit the ball by bending over at the waist because, in effect, you are hitting the ball with just your arm. Your knees should be bent, thereby putting your body into the stroke. You also should not hit the ball with your weight on your back foot.

3 SERVING

By Victor I. Spear, M.D.

Editor's Note: The article is reprinted from *How To Win At Racquetball*, by Victor I. Spear, M.D., Camelot Towers, Rockford, Ill., 1976

Because the game of racquetball so rarely lends itself to service aces (as in tennis), the serve is often discounted as being unimportant. It is approached by many players as no more than a trivial necessity to get the ball into play (as in badminton or volleyball.) This exhibits a gross misunderstanding of the situation, and misses the vital point:

The purpose of a good serve is not to win the point with an ace, but to create enough difficulty to force a weak return, so as to win the point on the second shot.

There is also another thing to consider. Many players consider the serve return an ideal kill shot opportunity because they have so much time to set up properly. They may hit kill shots on 50% or more opportunities regardless of what kind of serve is offered up. In order to reduce the effectiveness of their execution, the serve must be carefully placed. So you may want to look at serving another way:

It isn't so much a matter of hitting good serves as it is to avoid hitting poor ones that might result in kill shot set-ups.

There is simply no excuse for not serving well, because:

1. You are rested.
2. You have plenty of time to think.
3. You are never rushed.
4. You know what you are going to do before he does.
5. You have many more options than you might realize.
6. You have a guaranteed positional advantage.

The key to effective serving is **variety**. This may seem simplistic, but you must recognize that no matter how well-placed a serve may be, a good player will adapt to it in time. In order to make every serve a challenge, there must be a mind-boggling mixture, so that he never has a chance to adjust to anything. The player who repeatedly hits nothing but low drives to the left corner may execute that particular serve well, but his effectiveness will diminish as the game goes on, and his opponent becomes grooved in the right tempo. The value of all serves can be increased many times by mixing them up.

If I began by saying that there are twenty different serves in racquetball, you might at first think you had read a misprint. Think again. There may be no more than three or four basic serve **types**, but each of these can be tremendously influenced by such factors as:

1. The server's court position (angle)
2. The sharpness and speed of the stroke
3. The height of the ball
4. The court depth of the shot

When you re-appraise the serve with these variables in mind, you begin to get the message:

There may actually be as many as one hundred serves in racquetball!

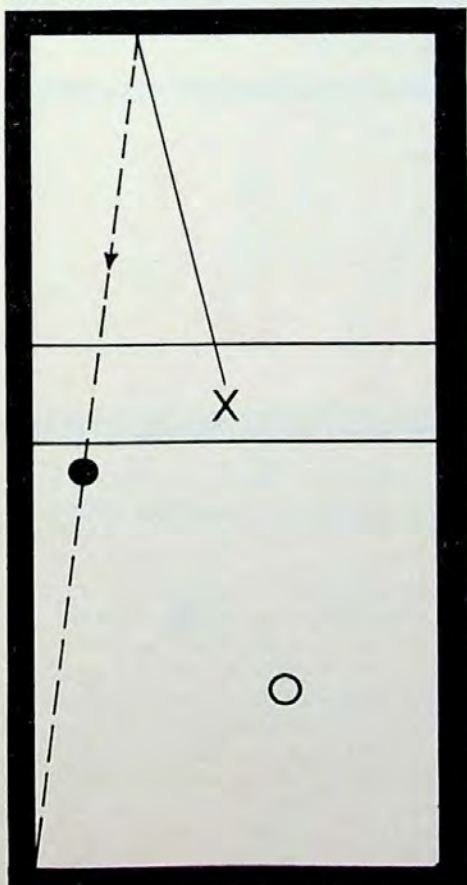
The most important serves will be described briefly, with or without comment, and accompanied by a diagram. Keep in mind, however, that the subtle differences resulting from variations in speed, height and server's position cannot be clearly illustrated by the diagrams.

THE MAJOR SERVES OF RACQUETBALL

1. Lob drive to the left corner from center court.

This serve should be hit low and sharply, so as to barely reach the back wall crotch before the second bounce. If the serve carries too deeply and comes up off the back wall, it may be a kill shot opportunity for a good shooter. If your opponent tends to move up on this one, angle it more widely, so as to hit the side wall before he gets to it.

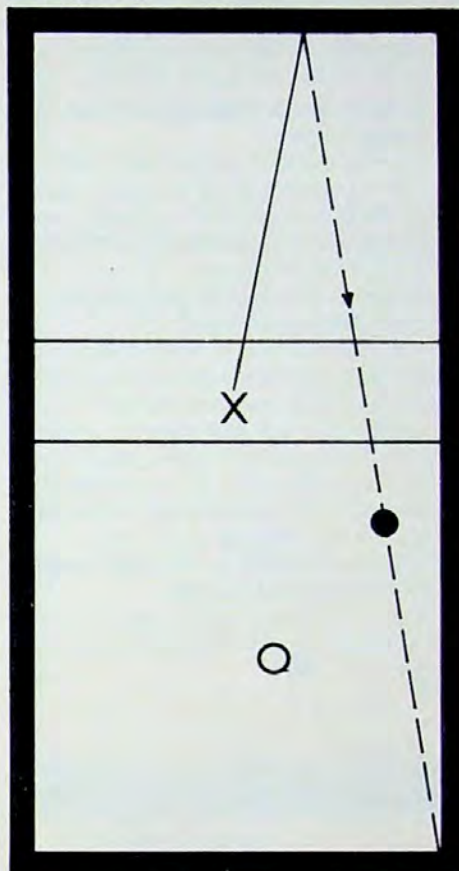
Serve #1



2. Low drive to the right corner from center court.

Same comments as for serve #1.

Serve #2



3. Low drive to the left corner from right-center court.

The depth should be the same as in #1. This serve is angled more sharply away from the player, and can be very effective against a tired player in the late stages of a match. It is also more demanding on the server, as it requires a quick move to the left side after serving.

4. Low drive to the right corner from left-center court.

Same comments as for serve #3.

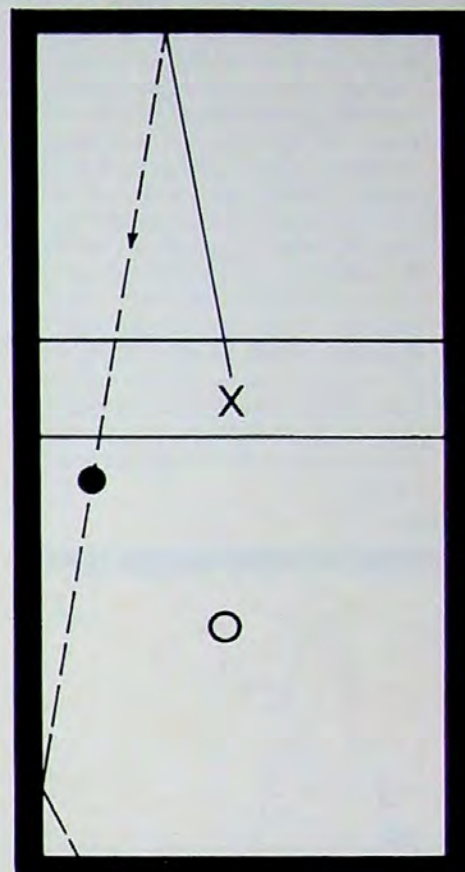
5. Lob serve to the left corner from center court.

This serve is designed to hit the side wall deep in the back court, so as to rebound falling to the back wall with nothing left on it. It requires a very delicate touch with superior accuracy. The margin for error is very slim, compared to the above. If it's just a fraction off, it can be transformed from a difficult serve to an easy set-up. This is one serve to be abandoned if you are having trouble with accurate placement.

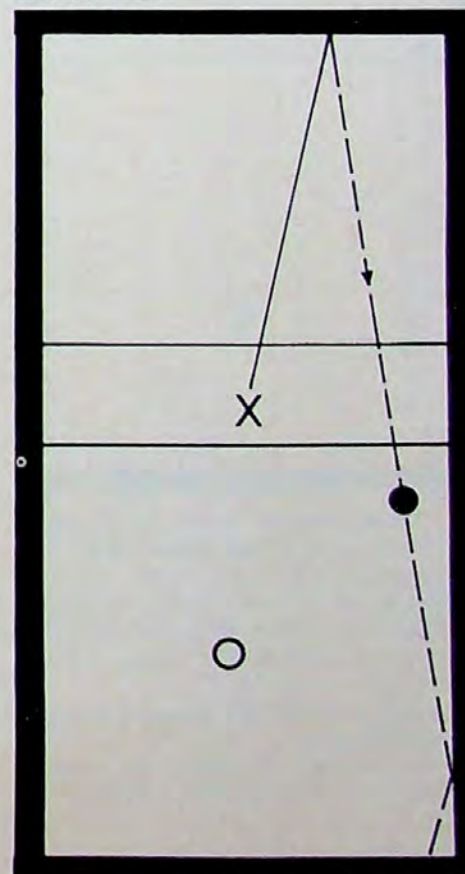
6. Lob serve to the right corner from center court.

Same comments as for serve #5.

Serve #5



Serve #6

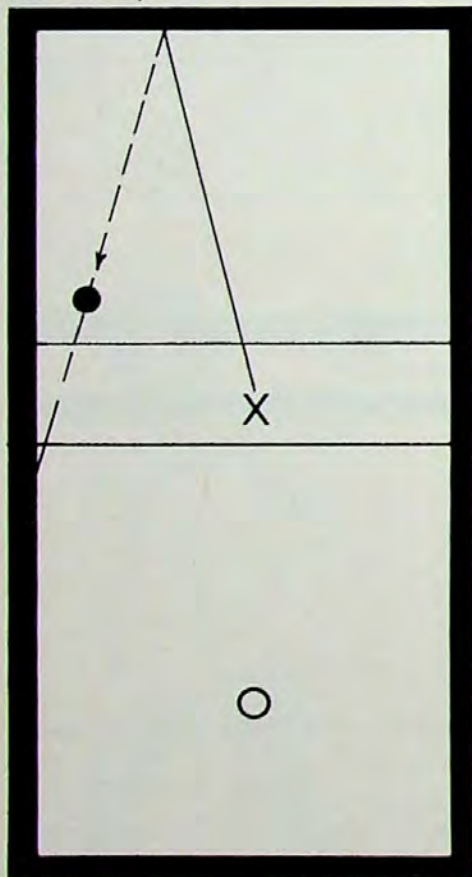


SERVING

7. "Short corner" serve to the left from center or right center court.

This is, of course, a misnomer, because the target is not actually a corner. The "corner" refers to the angle made by the short line and the side wall crotch. This is one of the rare examples of trying to get the serve in for a quick ace. It is a low driving serve designed to almost "crack out" just barely over the service line. To have any hope of success on this serve, the ball must be struck at a very low point, just above the floor. The margin of error is small here, but if you miss, you are better off missing **short**, thereby getting a second chance to serve. If you miss long or high, the ball comes back to the center for an easy set-up. This serve can be a game winner against a tired player at the end of a match.

Serve #7



8. "Short corner" serve to the right from center or left center court.

Same comments as for serve #7. The short corner serve to the right can also be very effective from **right** center court, but a good referee will call a screen on the serve, or at least he should.

9. Z-serve to the left corner from left center court.

This serve should be hit low and sharply so as to reach the side wall deep into the

back court about waist high, and die into the back wall with a lot of down spin. The key to this serve is the depth of the side wall contact. If it comes in shallow, the receiver can move up and hit a cross-court pass. If it comes in too deep and rebounds off the back wall, it may be a setup kill shot for a good shooter.

10. Z-serve to the right corner from right center court.

Same comments as for serve #9. This can be a surprisingly effective serve if consistently well-placed against a player who isn't accustomed to it, even if he is a good forehand shooter.

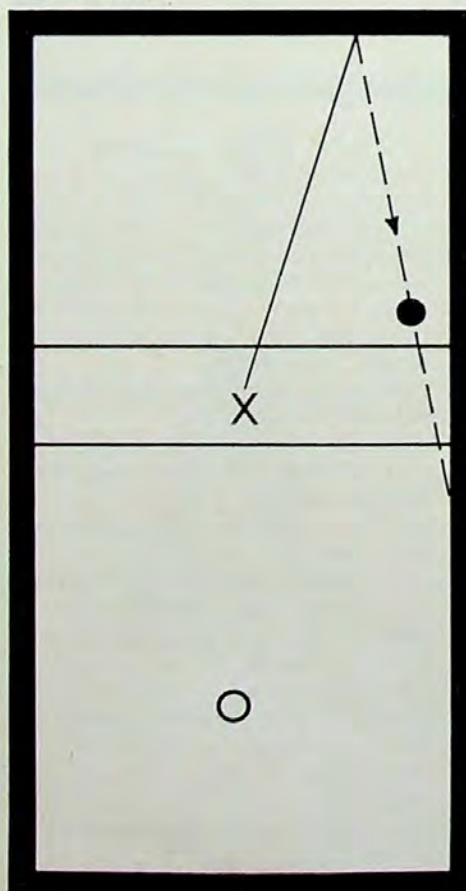
11. Z-serve half-lob to the left corner from left center court.

This serve varies from #9 in three ways. It should be delivered less sharply, slightly higher and angled more directly into the back corner with nothing left on it after it hits. This serve is the safest, most reliable and least risky of any to use as a **second serve**. If executed properly, it eliminates everything but a ceiling shot return.

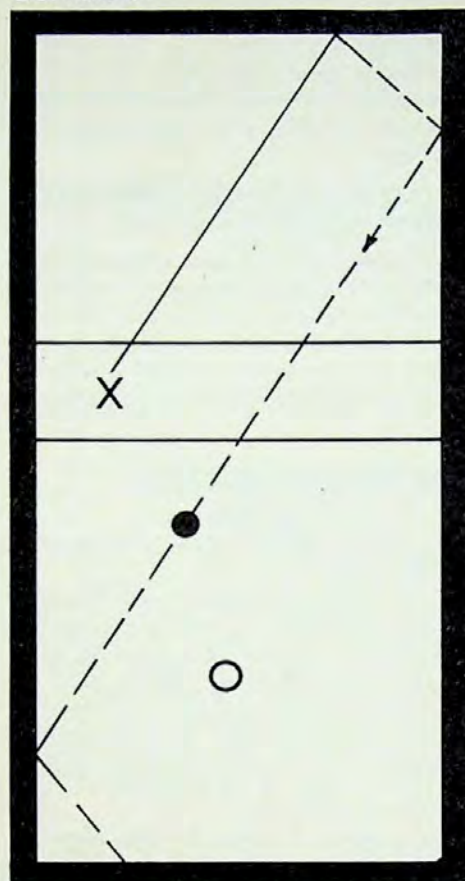
12. Z-serve half-lob to the right corner from right center court.

Same comments as for serve #11, but more risky, and not as good for a second serve.

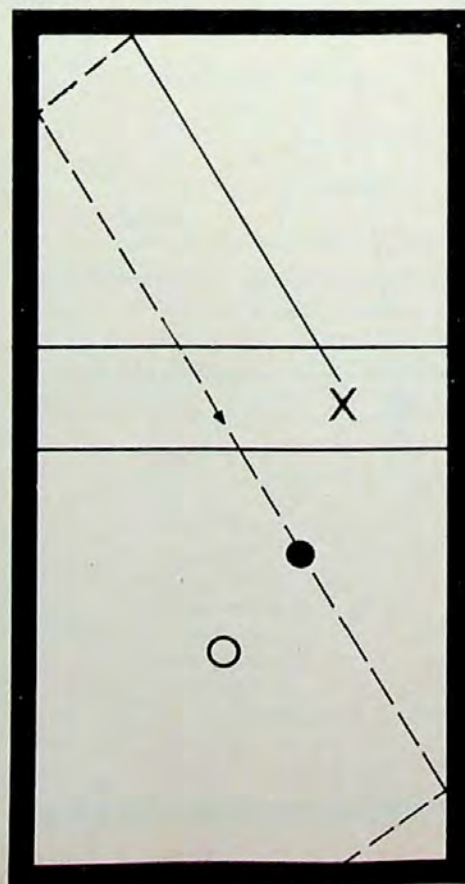
Serve #8



Serve #9



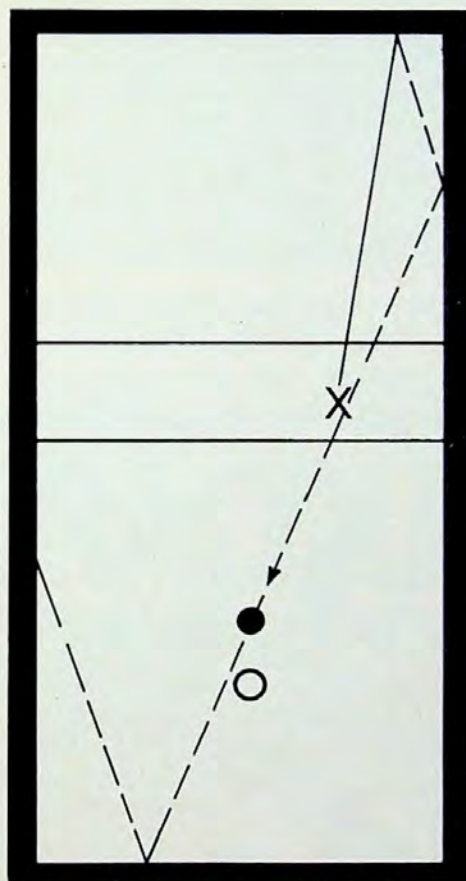
Serve #10



13. Z-serve to the left corner from right center court.

This is a serve that is seldom used by most players, so it may have some intrinsic value as a secret weapon of sorts. It should be angled so as to hit the back wall before the side wall. Because of the unusual service position, it can come off the back wall with a very surprising type of spin, causing it to jump straight forward and forcing the unwitting player into a weak return. This serve is most effective when mixed in with the other more commonly used varieties of Z-serves to the left corner.

Serve #13



14. Z-serve to the right corner from left center court.

Same comments as for serve #13, but more risky.

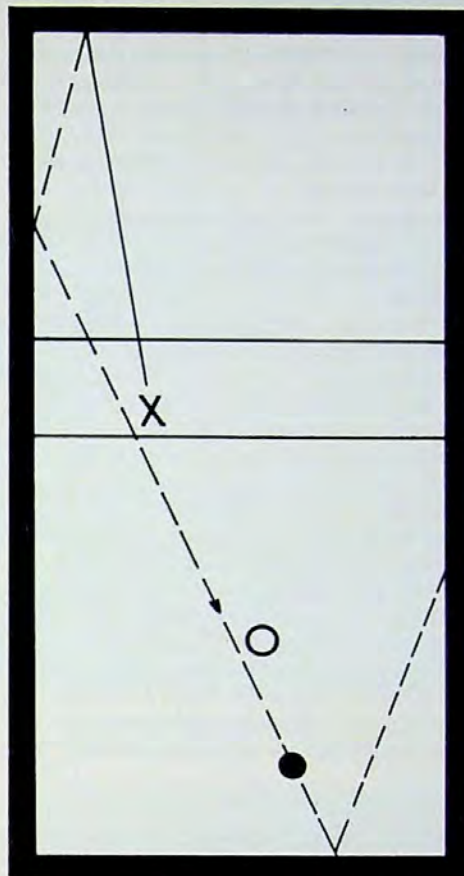
15. High bounce overhead Z-serve to left corner from left center court.

This serve can be delivered in various ways so as to hit either side wall or back wall first and give rise to unusual spins. At times it may come off the side wall directly parallel with the back wall, as an ideal Z-ball does in regular play. (The only reply to this, of course, is to cut it off short before it hits the side wall.)

16. High bounce overhead Z-serve to right corner from right center court.

Same comments as for serve #15.

Serve #14



17. Wallpaper serve to the left corner from the left edge

This serve is delivered as a soft high lob which just barely misses the left wall throughout its entire course. Some players can drive you nuts with this serve, but it is very difficult to execute, and there is always the danger of hitting the side wall before the front wall which results in loss of serve.

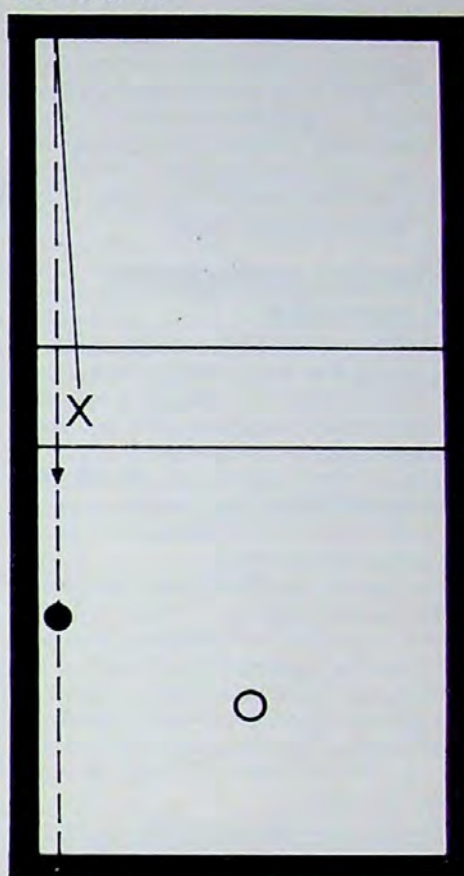
18. "Wallpaper" serve to right corner from the right edge.

Same comments as for serve #17, but probably best saved to use against a left-handed player.

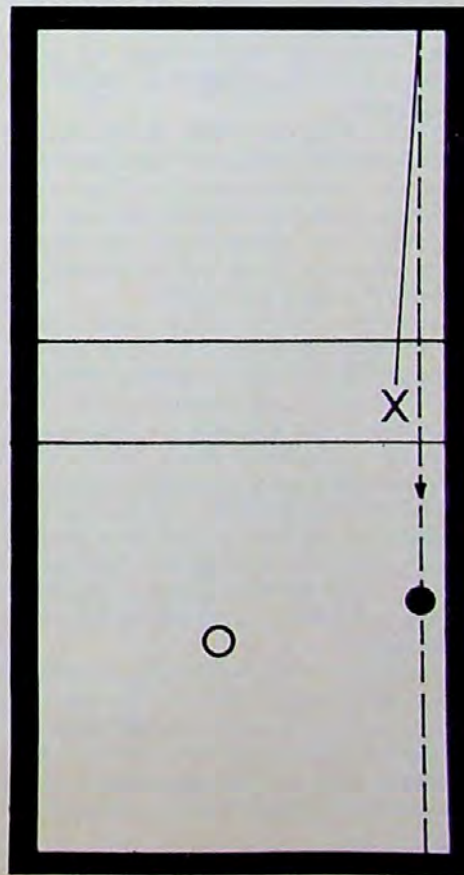
19. "Garbage" serve to the left from center court.

This is a lob serve without the high arc. It is delivered very softly at about shoulder height, so as to bounce about four feet past the service line, and then reach the back wall in a softly descending arc. Corner direction is not crucial. Its primary purpose is to prevent a kill shot return. If served correctly, there is never an opportunity for the receiver to strike the ball below the waist. A ceiling shot return can be expected.

Serve #17



Serve #18



SERVING

20. "Garbage" serve to the right from center court.

Same comments as for serve #19, but more dangerous if depth is not perfect.

There is an almost infinite variety of serve possibilities based on subtle changes in speed, height, angle and serving position. Keep an open mind to other possibilities, and don't be afraid to try a new one once in a while.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON SERVING

- EVERY** serve should be delivered with full concentration in an effort to draw a poor return, winning the point on the next shot. Good serves also allow very few point-stealing kill shots on the return.
- The importance of having a **RIGHT-SIDE SERVING GAME** to augment the usual left-corner serves cannot be overemphasized. Consider the following:
 - The greater the variety, the more difficult each serve becomes.
 - The player never has a chance to become grooved on the tempo of any serve.
 - The player is probably not accustomed to very many right-side serves. (Watch the forehand kill shot specialist fall over in a state of shock when you begin serving to the right side!)
 - You will occasionally uncover a glaring weakness in his returns on one of these serves (i.e., the Z-serve to the right corner.)
 - The short corner serve to the right is very effective against a tired player near the end of a long match.
 - You must have these serves in your bag, anyway, to use against a left-handed opponent.
- It must be conceded that right-side serves are more risky, being delivered, in general, to your opponent's strength. Greater accuracy is called for. You may get away with a minor error served to the left, but the same error on the right side is more likely to result in a quick loss of point.
- Keep your opponent's most recent error in mind when you select your next serve. Most players tend to overcompensate for the error, and this human tendency can be capitalized to your advantage. For example, if he has just made an error in judgment by allowing a Z-serve to the left to die at his feet off the back wall by not moving up and hitting the ball soon enough, he is likely to move up on the next one. Why not sharpen the angle on the same serve so as to hit the side-wall further forward, and jam him from his intent?
- You haven't truly completed the act of serving until you have made your first move toward your next position to anticipate his return. Discipline yourself to think of this **before** serving. Don't leave yourself open to simple pot shots and painful surprises.

4 POSITIONING

By Janell Marriott

One of the most important parts of the game, if not THE most important part, is positioning. A player is not going to get a good shot at the ball if not in the proper place at the proper time.

That's where proper positioning comes in.

Many instructors talk about moving back into center court position after serving, and most intermediate players think that center court means dropping back a few feet past the short line.

You should be dropping back into, let's say, a modified center court position. I call it "V" positioning.

The V position is the angle in which you move back after the serve. The bottom of the V is the short line and the sides of the V are diagonal directions toward each corner.

If you serve a good one into the corner, your V is fairly wide. If you serve it more into the center, your V becomes much narrower.

The biggest problem is that people serve and then back up into center court, never watching the ball and never looking back. They have no idea where the ball has been hit and where the ball will be hit to. By the time they figure out where it's going, they can't respond fast enough to get a good shot. They

miss an important split second which could make the difference between just returning the ball and getting a good kill shot.

By turning on the V angle, you watch the ball and see where your opponent is hitting it. Your feet should not be facing directly into the side wall but at an angle between the side wall and front wall.

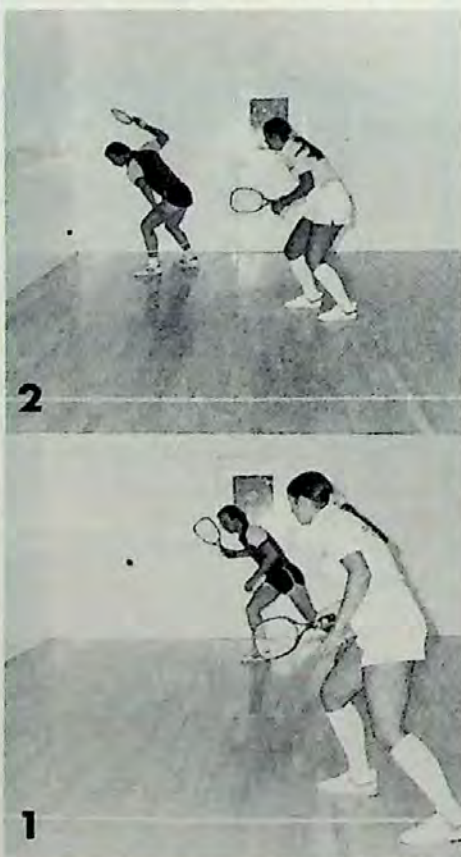
If you are at a 45 degree angle facing the side wall you can move a lot faster out of that position than if your feet are directly facing the side wall.

There is no hard and fast rule about where on the V you should stand. It depends, of course, on where your opponent is, how good your serve is and how the ball is placed on the court.

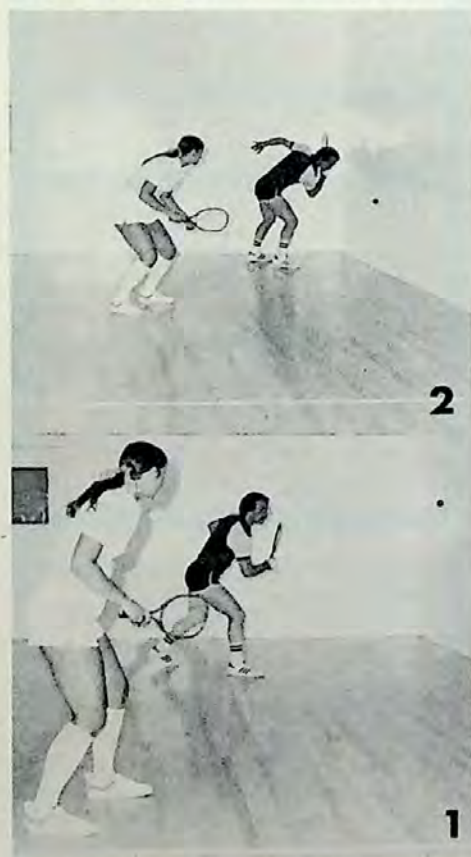
Generally, you can figure on being about four or five feet out from the side wall, maybe about four or five feet behind the short line. But if you are serving a deep lob, naturally, you will be moving back a little farther.

You can slide along the V to adjust your position. You also have to give your opponent a clear shot. You can "cheat" a little by "forcing" your opponent to hit down the line by cutting off part of the court but you still have to give the hitter his shot.

Always watch the hitter. That's one reason I recommend eyeguards. Even if you serve a



Proper positioning after serving is not just taking a couple of steps back into the so-called center court area, says Janell Marriott. Here she shows the proper forehand and backhand positioning. Note



how she shuffles along an imaginary "V", keeping her eye on the opponent to get an indication as to what type of shot he will be hitting.

bad serve, if you are watching the hitter hit the ball, you can guess pretty much where it will be going.

You can also predict what the hitter will be doing. If the hitter has his or her shoulder up, chances are it will be a ceiling shot. If the shoulder is down low, he's trying to shoot.

Also watch the position of the hitter's feet. If

he's facing the side wall, he's trying to go down the line. If the feet are slightly aimed toward the center he's going to try a cross-court pass.

And if you know what the opponent is going to be hitting, you will have ample time to set up for your next shot.



Here, Marriott shows what not to do. By not watching what your opponent is doing, you cannot get an educated guess as to where

his shot will be going and as a result you are "blind" to where to set up for your next shot.

5 service RETURNS

By Jennifer Harding and Jean Sauser
(third of a series)

Learning to effectively return a power hitter's serves is more than just a good idea for the less powerful player. It's a matter of survival.

Any server will have a distinct advantage over you: He has control of the ball and the opportunity to hit it anywhere and anyway he wants. As the receiver, you must try to deal with whatever comes your way.

When the server is a strong serve-and-shoot stylist, though, this strategic imbalance is even more acute and service return becomes a do-or-die proposition.

The serve is usually the power hitter's bread-and-butter shot, his principal offensive weapon. His strategy is to go for the ace, usually by hitting the ball as low and hard as he can.

Even if he doesn't get it past you on the serve, there is a good chance that your return will be so weak that he can put it away on his next shot.

The ultimate goal of service return, on the other hand, is to get a quick side out by hitting an offensive shot that the server can't return. It's easy to see how this could be a problem

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5 service RETURNS

against a strong serve that puts you off balance.

In our opinion, a wiser strategy is to settle for the secondary service return goal of gaining an advantage in court position. You want to force your opponent into the back court, giving you the opportunity to assume control of center court.

The ideal shot to achieve this is the ceiling ball return. It puts you on at least an equal footing with the server and gives you the opportunity to put into practice the control techniques we have discussed in previous articles.

Of course, the server can come right back with a ceiling ball of his own, but the point is that you are now playing your kind of game, instead of his kind of game. Many power hitters concentrate too much on the offensive aspects of racquetball to the detriment of their ceiling games.

Then too, anything can happen during a ceiling rally and, sooner or later, it usually does. You are waiting for your opponent to hit a poor ceiling return which will set you up for a high percentage offensive shot. He may even blow his shot altogether. It's not hard to do.

That's why you should work to develop your own ceiling game and use it as much as possible which is the only way to get good at it.

A good ceiling ball should contact the ceiling about five feet from the front wall, rebound to the front wall and to the floor, finally coming down as close to the foot of the back wall as possible. Usually, though, it is intercepted by a player before it takes that second bounce.

Often, a mis-hit ceiling ball will turn into a poor around-the-wall ball that drops into mid-court for a set up. Another common mistake players make is to hit their ceiling shots right down the middle of the court.

Always angle your shots so that they either go down-the-line or crosscourt and always end up in the corners where they will be twice as hard to return.

Avoid mis-hits by contacting the ball in front of you, instead of behind and over your head. Whenever possible, hit your ceiling balls side-arm at about shoulder height. If you have to hit an overhead shot, though, try to keep your feet on the ground in order to get maximum leverage.

Another advantage of a ceiling defense is that it slows the game down which is just the opposite of what your opponent is trying to accomplish. A power hitter wants to keep coming at you with fast, hard-hit balls, to keep you off-balance and on the defensive. If possible, he would like to lure you into a shootout which you are bound to lose.

That's why you should use judgement in selecting your offensive shots, particularly during service return. Your offensive weapons are your pinches, passes and kills.

Don't be afraid to use them, but use them only when you have a decent chance for success. You are bound to have plenty of opportunities but make sure that the following two

criteria are satisfied before you take an offensive shot:

(1) That you have enough time to get to the ball and get set up for your shot.

(2) That you are able to take a full swing unobstructed by either the side wall or the back wall.

Go for the kill if the serve bounces on the floor and comes off the back wall or side wall or if it approaches back court more than a couple feet away from the side wall. In either of these two instances, the server has, in effect, given you a pretty good set up.

But why not add a little insurance? Hit your kills straight down the line so that, if they stay up, they will still turn into decent down-the-line passing shots.

The down-the-line pass itself is advisable whenever your opponent stays roughly in the middle of the court after the serve. If he drops back and starts crowding over to the side the ball was served to, you can use the pinch which is basically the same shot except that the ball contacts the side wall and pinches out off the front wall from there. This sends it rolling over toward the opposite side of the court

from where your opponent stands.

A crosscourt pass which contacts the front wall and rebounds to the opposite rear corner from where it was hit can be used in either situation.

Don't make the mistake of hitting your crosscourt passes so low that they bounce in front of your opponent on their way into the back court. The idea is to get the ball around behind him and it is best if the ball takes its first bounce behind your opponent or, at least, even with him.

Once again, don't take a chance on these offensive shots unless conditions are right.

In summary, you want to play a slow-paced, control game while trying to minimize your mistakes and give your opponent every opportunity to make mistakes of his own.

Don't let yourself get flustered by a serve-and-shoot player or be forced into playing his game or going for low-percentage shots.

Remember, you are already one strike down whenever returning service and, against a power hitter, you are two strikes down. Don't make it a quick third by taking a swing at a sucker pitch.



When you are in doubt about your ability to properly set up for a good return of serve, Jean Sauser shows how you should set up for a ceiling shot.



A properly executed ceiling return will force your opponent into back court, thereby relinquishing center court to you.



When you have time to set up, Sauser shows how you take the offensive and go for a serve return down the line. By



hitting it low, you also have a chance for a straight-in kill shot.

6 KILLSHOTS

by David Peck

The kill shot is absolutely the most effective offensive weapon a racquetball player can command. The receiver has to strain to get low to retrieve it and must always be on his toes, constantly anticipating where, when, how fast, and how low you'll shoot.

Kill shots can be attempted from virtually anywhere on the court. One does, however, have a better chance of killing the ball in the

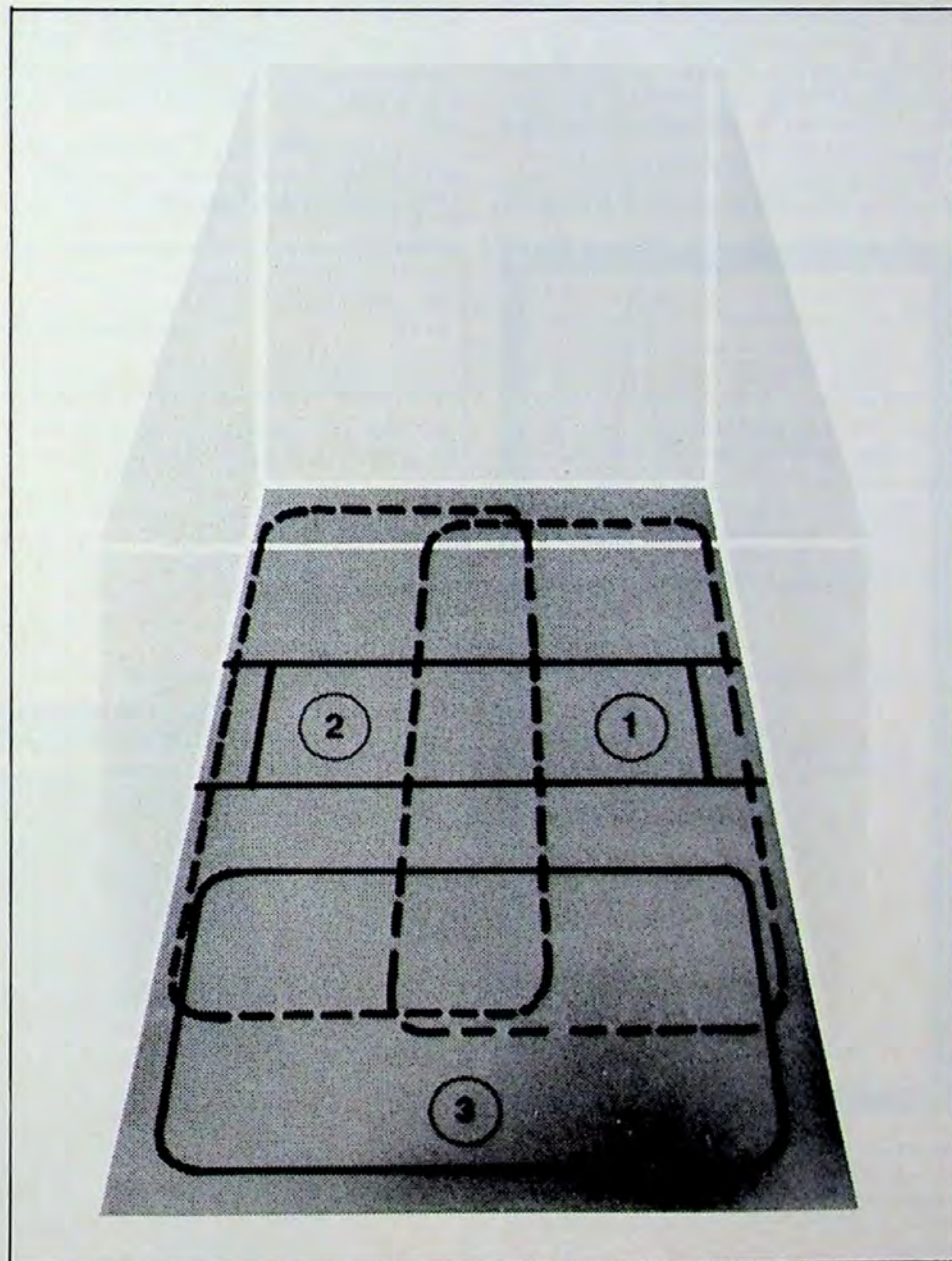
vicinity of the service zone. The reason is because your opponent will most likely be behind you, and therefore, farther from the ball. But there is also a disadvantage here in that it will be more difficult for you to know which way your opponent is leaning.

There are no definite dos or don'ts regarding where to shoot. There is, however, a good rule to follow: Put the ball where your opponent is not. Even if you're hitting 85 per cent of your kills, you're bound to leave some hang-

ing. If your shot is high but still far enough away from your opponent, it can also work as a passing shot.

When attempting a kill, the key word is "patience." You must let the ball fall below the knees (as low as you can), before hitting.

The basic reason for shooting the ball at a very low point is so the ball will stay low. If one shoots from the hip, for instance, in an attempt to make the ball hit the front wall low, the ball will be moving at such a great angle that it will



Areas for hitting kill shots: When hitting from within area (1), aim for the right corner. When in area (2), go for left corner. Opponent should be in area (3) when you are hitting kill shots. If you are outside areas 1 & 2, your best bet is probably a ceiling shot.

KILLSHOTS

bounce back relatively high. The higher it bounces, the easier it will be for the opponent to retrieve.

You should place yourself in a stationary position because you can't shoot effectively on the run.

The standard method of kill shot execution is as follows:

Assume a batter's stance with your lead foot a little closer to the side wall than your back foot. The knees should be more than slightly bent. The torso should be bent so as to assume a position almost over the ball.

The ball should be directly even with the front leg at the time of contact and the racquet motion should begin from above the shoulder. The wrist should be slightly cocked until just before hitting the ball.

In fact, for speed and a hard shot, the wrist should be in the middle of a snap at the same

time the racquet is touching the ball.

A follow through should be made with your legs, hips and shoulders. This will insure that you are not just swinging with your arm.

This procedure is identical for the backhand and forehand kill shot, except for one variation. In the backhand motion, the racquet will begin its descent to the ball from your free-hand shoulder. On a forehand kill, the racquet will begin from the vicinity of your racquet-hand shoulder.

There are no set rules on where and when to attempt a kill shot. It is commonly held that the kill which grazes the side wall first (reverse corner kill) is the most effective because the ball will die on the floor after hitting the front wall.

One type of kill shot hits low into the front wall and quickly wedges into the side wall.

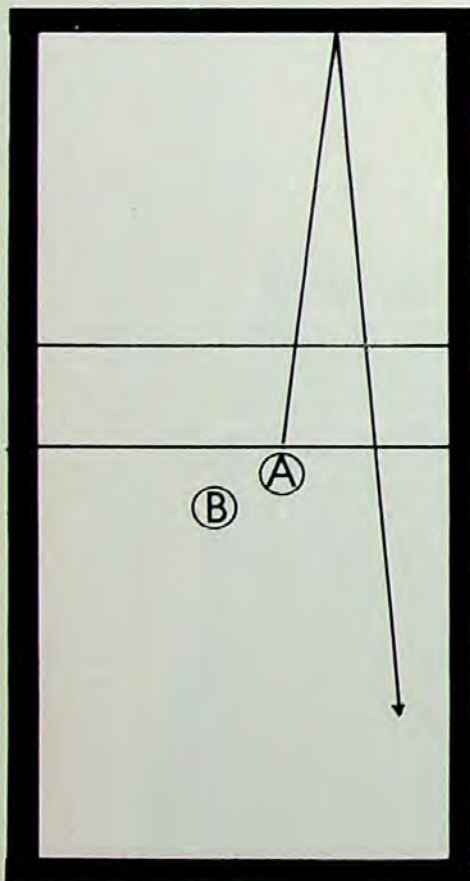
However, the disadvantage to this kill shot is

the fact that only a few inches make the difference between a ball that dies and one that rebounds into front center court.

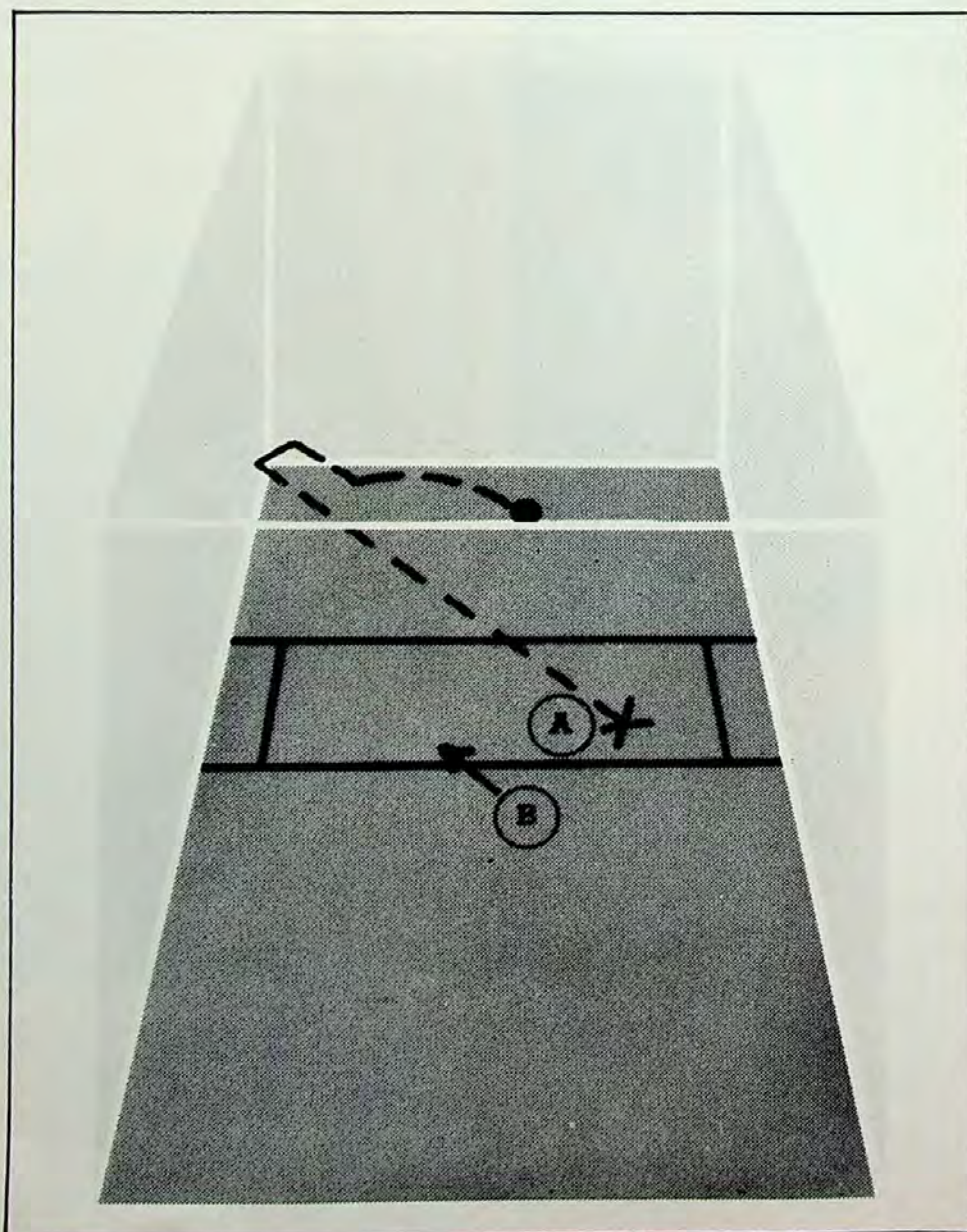
On the other hand, the ball hit straight into the front wall without contact with the side wall can sometimes serve as an effective pass shot when it is not low enough to be considered a kill.

Without a doubt the most beautiful sight to a racquetball player, is that of a ball rolling away from the front wall. When the ball doesn't bounce, there's no question as to whether the other guy is going to get it or not. "Good" isn't the word for a rollout. "Perfect" is.

Since it is the object of the game to make it difficult if not impossible, for your opponent to shoot easily, the kill shot is number one on any list of "shots to perfect." But, like most other things, it is easier said than done. I cannot stress enough the necessity of Practice.



Your best bets for kills when you are near the short line and your opponent is fairly close behind you is to either pass him down the line or try a reverse corner kill or pinch.



7 CEILING SHOTS

By Jack Kramer

Editor's Note: This is reprinted from Beginner's Racquetball, Jack Kramer, World Publications, Inc., Mountain View, Calif., 1979.

The ceiling ball is the most effective defensive shot in racquetball and can be played from almost any position on the court, with either a forehand or backhand. The purpose of the ceiling ball is to move your opponent out of the midcourt area into the back court area. If executed properly, the ball bounces high toward the back wall, arching as it does so.

The ceiling ball is not easy to hit; it requires time and practice, but it is the strongest defensive shot you can play. The ceiling shot is played directly up to the ceiling, near the juncture of the ceiling with the front wall. The ceiling target is one to five feet from the front wall. If you fail to strike within this area, the ball will come up short—hit midcourt—and open the door for a kill by your opponent. The ball hitting the side takes away from the deep-court effectiveness; it puts the ceiling ball in the middle of the court without the arc effect. The ceiling shot is done with a hard hit directed toward your opponent's backhand side.

The best ceiling shot first strikes the ceiling, then the front wall, and then zooms to the floor, rebounding high. The rebound should be very near the back wall, thus making it almost impossible for the opponent to return it.

The two types of ceiling shots most often used are the forehand overhead ceiling return and the backhand overhead (waist-high) ceiling stroke. The waist-high ceiling stroke is used for hitting low balls. Involving an underhand flip of the wrist, this shot will give you a chance to recover court position if you are in a bad court spot and off balance.

Forehand Overhead Ceiling Shot

Execute the forehand ceiling shot with an overhand stroke. Try to have your racquet hit the ball head high and about a foot ahead of your head, off the front toe. (In a moment we tell you how to practice.) The rear-to-front foot weight and follow through will ensure the power necessary to get the ball where you want it, not where your opponent wants it.

To start the swing, keep the knees slightly bent and the racquet in position near the left ear. Rotate your hips to the left (or to the right if you are left-handed), and swerve the right (or left) shoulder down into a tucked position. As you move your hips and shoulders, your body weight will shift to your back left (or right) foot.

You are now ready to uncoil and strike the ball with a thrusting forward motion. Twist your hips around to the right (or left) (toward the front wall), and move your right (or left) shoulder out of the tuck position and stroke the ball.

Keep your racquet hand stiff and extended as you get ready to strike the ball; upon contact your wrist will snap slightly, imparting an

undercut action that creates ball speed. Hit the ball waist high or slightly higher, depending on where the ball presents itself. Keep the racquet slanted backward (open-faced) so you can get the upward angle.

To practice the forehand overhead ceiling shot, face the side wall and use the forehand position. Toss the ball above your head, as you would if you were making a tennis serve. Strike the ball after it has peaked and started its descent to the floor. To swing, extend your racquet arm from the forehand position to near your ear and then to the ball. Try to strike the ball so it hits the ceiling as close to the front wall as possible. Make the contact point occur just in front of your body, above your head and over your lead foot. Then follow through with the racquet pointing to the floor.

Always point your lead foot backward, pointing to the front wall, with your back foot turned and pointing to the side wall. This gives you the push you need to reach up and swing with power. Make contact with the ball in front of your body over your lead foot, and move into position quickly.

The Backhand Overhead Ceiling Return

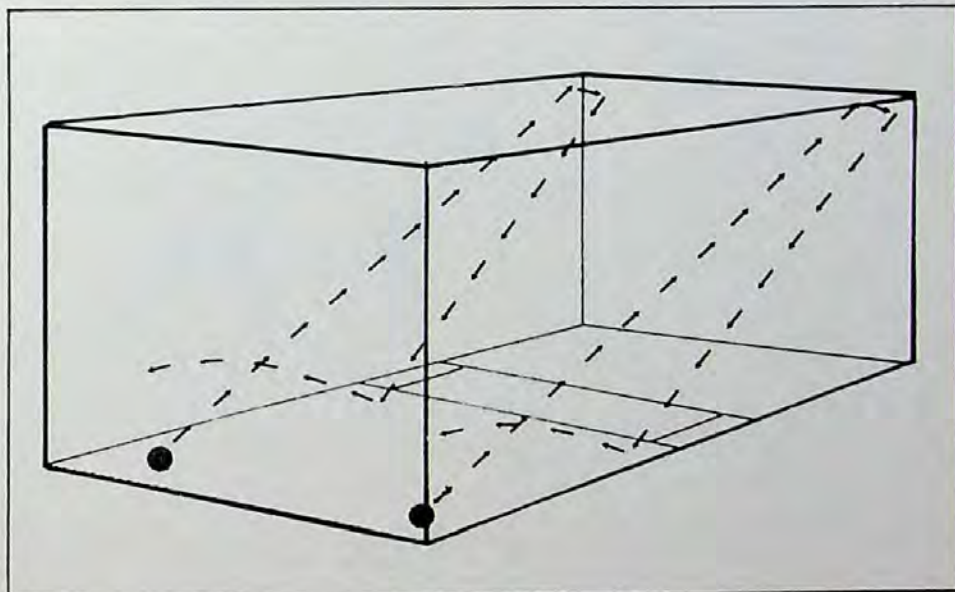
The backhand overhead ceiling ball is an effective return of your opponent's ceiling ball. This is a difficult shot, requiring a backhand swing over your head from deep-court position.

The same principles that apply to the regular backhand stroke are in effect for this shot. Get into the standard backhand position and

drop the ball, as you do when practicing a standard stroke. Hold the racquet across your body until your lead foot steps into the swing. As you move your arm forward, drop your nonracquet shoulder slightly—this elevates the racquet shoulder and opens the face of the racquet when it makes contact with the ball. The open face (strings tilted slightly to the ceiling) makes hitting the ball upward easier.

As you swing, snap your wrist just before you make contact with the ball. Again, strike the ball out in front of your body and over your lead foot. The lower the ball drops to the floor, the more effort is necessary to hit the ball upward toward the ceiling. Follow through with the standard backhand stroke, with your racquet just a little higher upon contact and completion.

Practice the backhand overhead ceiling shot by letting the ball bounce first. But instead of catching the ball after the bounce, move into position and, using an overhead stroke, strike the ball back to the ceiling. To do this, position your racquet in the standard backhand position until you want to step to contact the ball. Then raise your racquet and drive your elbow forward. The wrist should snap naturally just before you make contact with the ball; the follow through leaves your racquet arm bent, with your racquet above your head. Avoid making contact with the ball too close to the body because this causes you to hit the ball with an uneven racquet face, and the ball will probably slice off into a side wall. The most effective contact is made slightly out in front of the body.



8 WALLPAPER SHOTS

By Jerry Hilecher

The wallpaper ball is one of the most racquet-twisting, knuckle-scraping experiences in racquetball. When your opponent is on the receiving end, it's great . . . for you. But, when you are on the receiving end, a wallpaper ball can be pure frustration.

A racquetball glossary defines the wallpaper ball simply as, "A shot that travels very close to the side wall on the way to the back wall."

The wallpaper ball can travel toward the back wall at any height. Usually it comes off the front wall at a perfectly acceptable height and pace. In fact, if it were just a couple of inches nearer to center court, it would make a good plum. A player has only about a one-in-five chance of making a decent return of a wallpaper ball.

But whatever height or speed, the ball is glued to the side wall as it travels into back court, giving the player virtually no room for error in his swing.

Usually, a player faced with a wallpaper shot will try to hit it too hard. But no matter how hard or soft the ball is hit, a player can't hope to control the shot. The result is usually an easy return for his opponent unless one can return the ball along the same wall, creating a wallpaper shot for the other player.

A second aggravating characteristic of the wallpaper ball is that it doesn't always stay on the wall. The ball may hug the wall all the way into the back court only to knick it slightly and jump off just as a player is about to hit it.

It's this kind of behavior that can send you up the wall if you are trying to handle one of

these shots. But you can improve your chances for a decent return if you can keep your cool.

You don't have to change shots for a wallpaper return, just attitude. When you see the ball sliding back along the wall, it should be a signal for you to switch into low gear.

Make up your mind that you are going to hit a ceiling ball, because any attempt at an offensive return will probably just get you into trouble.

Also realize that you will not have a full swing because, obviously, the wall is going to be in the way. Then, too, the ball may jump out at you, so position yourself far enough away from the wall to be able to handle it if it does.

Think of your racquet as a big spatula and try to scoop the ball off the wall and up to the ceiling instead of trying to hit it. Quadriform or modified quadriform shaped racquets work best on this particular shot because their heads are flatter and, therefore, slide along the side wall better.

It was partially with this shot in mind, in fact, that I designed Ektelon's Hilecher model racquet with its extra flat head extrusion. But even more important than the shape of your racquet, is the emphasis on control that you put into your stroke.

But don't be deceived. It may be easy to describe, but it's hard to execute. In fact, it's probably the hardest shot in racquetball, so you'll want to put in some practice time to get yourself used to the wall.

That's the bad news about wallpaper shots. The good news is that you can use a wallpaper ball as a good offensive shot.

Of course, you can't hit wallpaper shots with anything approaching the frequency of your other shots, but you can improve your chances with proper attention to down-the-line drives.

You don't have to be right against the side wall to have your shot rebound close to it, although closer is better in most cases. Even a crosscourt pass can come off the front wall as a wallpaper shot. It's all a question of how it goes into the front wall.

Unfortunately, I can't tell you how to hit the ball so that it comes off as a wallpaper every time. The angles will change, depending on what spot you are on the court. The only way to become acquainted with it is through practice and play.

Incorporating more down-the-line drives into your game strategy will increase your chances of hitting a wallpaper ball. A familiarity with this shot can't hurt your game either. It is especially useful during service return.

Just concentrate on putting the ball as low and close to the side wall as possible. If it comes off as a low pass, fine. If it comes off as wallpaper, so much the better.

Alternate your down-the-line drives with crosscourt drives just to keep your opponent off balance. These shots will work either backhand or forehand and should be executed with the normal backhand or forehand stroke.

As with any passing shot, you want to be careful that you don't put so much angle on the ball that it comes off the side wall into center court, giving your opponent an easy return.

To summarize, the most important point to remember is to keep your head and control your racquet regardless of which end of a wallpaper ball you happen to be on.

When returning wallpaper, play it safe and hit a ceiling ball. On offense, go for it. You may get lucky and, with a wallpaper shot, luck is usually the difference between success and failure.



Success in hitting a wallpaper shot is partly luck, so Hilecher advises to go for down-the-line drives, thereby increasing your chances of hitting a wallpaper ball.



Jerry Hilecher's wallpaper shot is difficult to return and difficult to judge. It almost takes a little bit of luck to return it properly.

9 THE OTHER ARM

By Davey Bledsoe

Most people know what to do with their main arm in racquetball. That is, the arm used to hit the ball.

But what about the other arm? What to do with that? In conducting my clinics, I have found most intermediate players don't know what to do.

I won't go so far as to say that most intermediate racquetball players are converted tennis players, who are used to using a two-handed backhand. Thank goodness, not too many players do that. Or if they once did it, they have long since dropped that bad habit.

But I do see many players who put their other arm in front of their bodies on a forehand shot, and I can't understand why they do it.

They almost look as if they are hugging themselves.

By doing that your arms are working against themselves. They are antagonizing each other.

The arm should be away from the body on the forehand shot. The arm has to lead the motion. It has to initiate the shoulder rotation.

The arm should continue around the body. If this is done, the shoulder will be in the proper position—parallel to the front wall—which gives your shoulder maximum rotation.

I'm amazed at some of the positions I see players get in. I'm amazed they don't hit themselves in the chest. I can't believe the way they wrap their arms around their bodies.

Some people will end up crossing their

arms. This, as I said, works counter to the perfect stroke.

I'm not advocating that the arms swing around at the same time and at the same rate of speed. The off-arm should actually move around the body first, creating the desired pulling effect.

If you don't have this pulling effect, you won't get much power in your shots.

In short, on the forehand stroke, your hitting arm should be swinging towards the front wall and your off-arm should be swinging towards the back wall.

The backhand is basically the opposite. You should allow your arm to come in close to the body. This creates the proper dragging effect and allows for maximum shoulder rotation.



The non-hitting arm on the forehand should stay away from your body (left and center). It should create a pulling effect, thereby giving you maximum body movement. Here, Davey Bledsoe shows what not to do. By putting your arm in towards your body, you are actually being counter-productive to a proper swing.



The backhand, says Bledsoe, works just the opposite. The other arm pulls in toward the body, working basically in the same direction as the stroke itself.

10 HOW TO PRACTICE

*Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the book **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED RACQUET-BALL** by Victor I. Spear, M.D., Copyright 1979 by Time Inc. Reprinted by permission of Lipincott-Crowell, Publishers.*

By Victor I. Spear, M.D.

Behind any great athlete is practice. The glitter and the gold are never the result of good fortune, they are richly deserved. Although it has become somewhat fashionable for a few of the top stars to portray themselves as "casual" heroes—beer-drinking, party-going rowdies—the whole image is fraudulent. If they have achieved limelight stature, it's the result of practice, practice, practice, not of extracurricular escapades. Dedication and superb conditioning are always there, even if they choose to flash a different facade for public consumption.

A few years ago Jack Nicklaus described his practice technique prior to a victory in the U.S. Open. Among other drills, he hit five sand shots out of every trap on the golf course one day. That amounted to 550 sand shots! The story has a happy ending, as do most Golden Bear tales. During the four-day tournament he landed in sixteen bunkers. Fifteen times he was able to get up and down in two strokes. That drill probably won the tournament.

Former national champion Charlie Brumfield has been known to practice one shot a thousand times without a break. And then move on to another and do the same.

The message is clear. The more you practice, the better you play. And the better you play, the more fun you have. Having a gift is one thing; developing it to the fullest, and seeing it flower, is another.

Although the best time to practice a shot is right after you miss it, you don't have that privilege in a match. When you serve two inches shy for a short-corner ace, you can't try it again for fear of double-faulting. And you can't concentrate on form if you have to be concerned with the outcome of the shot. In match play, form should be the farthest thing from your mind. But good form becomes natural only after you've worked at it over and over in practice.

Let's not pretend that practice is fun. We'd all rather play. The problem of monotony in practice is a challenge to anyone's ingenuity. Imaginary gaming techniques may be needed to soup up the action and keep you from being bored to death. Anything is worthwhile that will divert your attention from the dismal reality that you are repeating the same motion like an obsessive automaton. You'll need a dose of self-deception to "enjoy" practicing.

Practice methods should be designed to fit practice goals. Some things are best worked out alone on the court. Others fit better into a two-player routine. Still others cannot be developed unless live play is in progress. These three settings are all useful in their own right and will be discussed separately.

See how long you can keep it going with control. It's tougher than you think. Concentrate on form, footwork, and body action. Be sure to take a full pivot with each shot, then a full follow-through, and return to the face-front position. This exercise will also help you adjust to the slight grip rotation needed in going from forehand to backhand and back again. You must learn to hit the strokes right before you start going for kill shots.

Passing-Shot Drill

Take a center position just behind the short line. Hit a soft shot to the front wall that rebounds to your forehand. Hit a sharp pass down the right side (down-the-wall pass) so that it hugs the wall all the way. Repeat several times.

Subdivide the cross-court pass into two types. The first should rebound parallel with the left side wall as a mirror image of the down-the-wall pass. The second should be angled more sharply so as to hit the side wall in the service area (V-pass). Repeat several times. Then practice the same three shots with the backhand stroke.

Repeat the whole exercise on shots rebounding off the back wall.

On all passing shots, keep in mind that the most common error is hitting the ball too high—giving the opponent a second chance off the back wall. Be sure your target on the front wall is no more than 2-3 feet high. Then watch carefully to see that your passing shots don't hit the back wall before the second bounce.

Kill-Shot Drill

Some authors recommend the "drop-and-hit" drill, in which you simply drop the ball from your hand and hit a kill shot. I think it's a poor drill, too far removed from reality. It's far better to practice your kill shots on live setups. Simulate actual play as closely as possible. First the forehand:

1. Hit a soft shot to the right front wall that rebounds no farther than the short line. Set up and kill to the right corner. Repeat and vary the depth.

2. Hit a soft ceiling shot that rebounds into the same area. Set up and kill to the right corner. Repeat and vary the depth.

3. Hit a medium-hard shot to the front wall near the corner so that it ricochets off the side wall to your forehand at mid-court. Set up and kill to the right corner. Repeat and vary the depth.

4. Hit a hard shot high off the right front wall so as to carry to the back wall on the fly. Follow the ball as it bounds forward, wait for the bounce and drop, then set up and kill to the right corner. Repeat.

5. Hit a hard ceiling shot on the right side so that it bounces off the back wall. Follow the path of the ball, set up and kill to the right

SOLO PRACTICE

I had originally planned to include a suggestion for a rigid one-hour practice drill, but I realized that I had never adhered to one myself. So you are on your own, but remember to spend your practice time productively. Work on the areas of your game that need the most help.

Before moving on to actual drills, a few general rules are in order:

1.

Use your time well. You aren't paid by the hour, but by the quality of the product. Have some definite purpose in mind when you practice.

2.

Keep in mind the value of both general and specific practice. Some days you may work a full-circuit routine. Other days you might devote the whole time to improving a single shot.

3.

Keep it simple—as you will if you follow my recommendations in this section. (Some drills I've seen in print would qualify you for a Ph.D. in physics.)

4.

Spend most of the time on your weaknesses, not on your strengths. Why is it that the best kill shooters persist in hitting mainly kill shots? It's stupid. Admittedly, it's more enjoyable to do what you're good at, but it won't make you a better player. Work on what you *can't* do well.

5.

Use live balls. There's a tendency in all sports to practice with old used equipment. That's all right for your shag bag in golf, but in this game you're taking a big risk. During solo practice you hit as many as five times the number of shots you hit in the same time span while playing; that is, you hit five hours' worth of shots in one hour. This is no time to save money: Try to get away with using dead balls so intensively and you might throw your arm out. Cortisone shots cost more than live balls.

Warmup Drill

Take a center position at three-quarter court depth. Hit a medium-hard fore-hand shot about three feet high on the front wall just to the left of center, so that it rebounds on one hop to your backhand. Then hit a similar backhand shot so that it returns to your forehand.

corner. (This is a much tougher shot than the last because you have to hit it before the bounce.) Repeat.

These five setup positions will cover most of your kill-shot chances in racquetball. But they are different shots, so practice them as separate entities. Mix in a few cross-court kills to the opposite corner, but don't spend too much time on these. In actual play, 90 percent or more should be hit to the near corner.

Repeat the whole exercise on the backhand side.

Your target for kill shots should be the corner, 6–12 inches above the floor. Aim for an area rather than a spot. Some try to jazz it up a bit by using an open box for a target, or stacked cans. If you're advanced enough to divide your kill shots into straight kill, pinch, and reverse pinch, do it. Always practice up to the level of your own ability.

Ceiling-Shot Drill

Ceiling-shot drill is perpetual. It's perpetual because a perfect ceiling shot to the left side almost demands the same return. It's ideal for solo practice. And so important. See how many perfect backhand ceiling shots you can hit along the left wall without catching that wall or rebounding too deep off the back wall. First pay attention to the depth, then the angle. Then both. Try to wallpaper every shot.

Now and then, hit a few cross-court, to the right side and back, with your forehand—but remember that the bulk of your ceiling-shot practice should be backhands to the left corner.

Z-Ball Drill

Hit a soft ceiling shot to the left side that comes up shallow near the short line. Hit a perfect backhand Z-ball to the left rear corner. Try to drive the ball deep—as close to the back wall as possible without hitting it. Repeat. Then do the same on the right side with the forehand. (You might also combine this drill with the previous ceiling-shot drill; each time a ceiling ball comes up short, hit the Z-ball.)

AWB Drill

Hit a ceiling shot that comes back to three-quarter court depth on the left. Hit a perfect backhand AWB to the right rear corner. Repeat. Then do the same with the forehand on the right side. (You might also combine this drill with the ceiling-shot drill for variety.) Concentrate on the height and depth of this shot. The object is to hit the second side wall high, just past the short line—deep enough not to give an immediate setup, yet not so deep as to come off the back wall for a delayed setup.

BUDDY PRACTICE

Most drills are more fun with a partner. You probably won't have one available as often as you'd like, but when you do, you can help each other work on your respective needs. Suggested drills:

Serve-and-Return Drill

The serve-and-return drill is easily the most important drill of all. As discussed earlier, the serve return is the most important shot in the game, but you need a partner, since you can't very well practice serve returns without someone to do the serving. If you practice serving alone, you spend half the time chasing the balls around.

Work on all varieties of serve. Use this time to hone down the finer points of angle and depth. You have a chance to concentrate, because for the moment you don't have to be concerned with the return. This is the time to develop the short-corner serve for that moment when you badly need an ace. Refine the subtle variations of the Z-serve so that no two are exactly alike. Also, work on improving your serve to the right side without setting yourself up for a blistering return.

Now change positions and work on your serve returns. Your principal focus should be on hitting perfect ceiling shots to the left corner with consistency. But you also take advantage of this type of practice to work on kill-shot returns and cross-court passes. Experiment against the Z-serve. Take a few in the air before they hit the floor or the side wall, and a few after. Try some Z-balls and AWBs for serve return variety.

If you've been blowing the returns on soft Z-serves to the right side, ask your partner to hit a few dozen. You'll be better at it the next time.

Kill-and-Retrieve Drill

A lot of players don't go after kill shots they might get to. Not because they're lazy, but because they never actually learn the potential range of their coverage. The kill-and-retrieve drill is a good way to discover that range. Another thing that will come as a surprise—even a shock—to most players is that kill shots come out much farther than it seems. Take a few minutes and watch a game sometime with this in mind. Take note of how far the ball comes out before hitting the floor a second

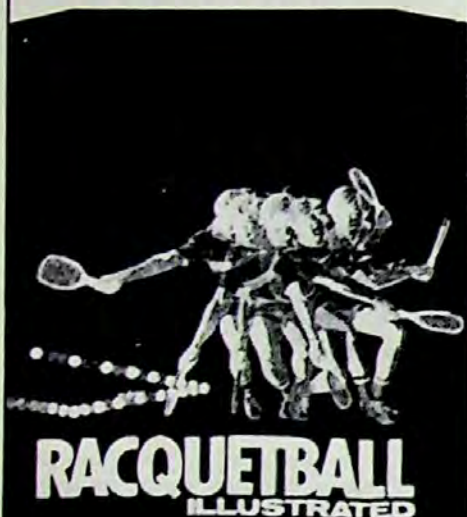


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PRACTICE

time. You'll find that the great majority, except for rollouts, will reach the service line—and I'm referring to *good* kill shots, not poor ones. Most of us are so frozen in place by the sight of a kill shot hitting low on the front wall that we don't react quickly enough to even cover the service-line area. Keep this in mind and it will take a lot of the pressure off. It isn't necessary to reach the front wall to retrieve kill shots. Just cover the service-line area and you'll get to most of them.

Hit soft ceiling shots that come up shallow near the short line. Your partner should respond with kill shots, and you try to retrieve *every one*—even those you don't think you can reach. Try a kill if you have a full stroke. If not, practice the drop shot. This is a good drill to develop mobility and anticipation—to get your body in motion *before* your partner actually hits the ball.

Switch positions and practice your kill shots while he does the digging.

Fly-Kill Drill

Hit an easy serve to the left corner. Your partner then hits a cross-court drive to your forehand. You pluck it out of the air *before* the bounce and kill to the right corner. Then serve to the right corner and practice the same shot with your backhand. Repeat.

Then change positions and practice your cross-court drives while he kills fly shots.

Reverse Back-Wall Drill

Take a position at center court near the short line. Hit a soft setup to the other player near the left side wall. He then hits a cross-court V-pass, and you whirl and try to save it with a reverse back-wall smash. Then do the same on the other side with your forehand. This is another drill in which your range of coverage will surprise you. You won't get to all the shots or even to the majority, but they will still amount to more than you would have guessed. This will help you develop a never-quit attitude toward passing shots in the future and is the major purpose of this drill, rather than the value of the shot itself.

Then change positions and give your partner the same runaround, as you practice your cross-court passes.

Cross-Court Ceiling-Shot Drill

The best way to practice the cross-court ceiling shot without wearing yourself out running back and forth is to station your partner in one rear corner, yourself in the other. Then simply hit cross-court ceiling shots over and over. This drill will prepare you for a left-handed opponent when the situation arises. He usually has a built-in advantage because his opponent isn't used to hitting cross-court backhand ceiling shots to the right corner. His backhand is rarely tested with accurate right-side ceiling shots.

Overhead Drill

One player in the service area and the other in back court. The front player hits a ceiling shot anywhere but along the left wall, allowing the rear player enough room to hit a variety of overhead kills and passes to either side. The forecourt player tries to retrieve and hit another ceiling shot. Keep on going as long as possible, aiming most of your overheads to the right corner.

Change positions and go at it again.

PRACTICE GAMES

How's your ego these days? Is it secure enough to survive an undeserved insult? Would you be crushed if a hacker ran off the court broadcasting his hollow victory over you to the whole club? Can you swallow a little pride and be satisfied with the knowledge that you could have beaten him if you had to?

Call it character building, if you will, but that's what it takes to get the most out of practice games on the way to future rewards. You must be willing to lose to a lesser player once in a while as you engage in "live" practice. If you rely exclusively on your strong points during practice games, you'll never get any better. You must work on new shots and weaknesses every time you play. You can't join the backhand kill-shot club until you hit your "initiation fee" into the floor a few thousand times. You can't develop an aggressive serving game without variety, and you achieve this only by working some new serves into your practice games. Sure, you'll set up a few choice pumpkins in the process. But that's how you learn. It's all worth it. You have to pay your dues to add a new dimension to your game. And when you beat the club kingpin someday, the echoes of that worthless hacker will quickly fade.

Always play with a plan. It's a terrible waste to spend an hour of time and effort on the court without planting at least a smidgen of long-term investment. Have a few objectives in mind—but not too many. There is such a thing as "overthink".

The centipede was happy, quite

Until a toad in fun

Said, "Pray, which leg goes after which?"

This worked his mind to such a pitch

He lay distracted in a ditch,

Considering how to run.

Take a lesson from the poor centipede: Don't clutter your mind with too many things—just two or three each time you play.

Without trees, Dr. J. might still be an intern.

This doctor operates on a 45' by 94' slab of wood. Wood from trees. Please remember that the next time he makes a house call to your city.



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you, there's no
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RICHARD HATCH and Existential Racquetball

By Mathew Tekulsky

Although sport has primarily been considered a physical endeavor, the psychological element has come under increasing scrutiny and has even been credited as the dominant factor in competitive athletics.

Books and articles testify to the merging of body and mind in sport and catch phrases such as "higher level of consciousness" and "playing out of the zone" are tossed out often at cocktail parties. Indeed, the philosophizers of sport seem to feed off of each other, and while they sometimes elevate prevailing attitudes, they also complicate the issues to the extent that if one were to mentally consume everything they were saying, one would hardly have room left in the brain to apply to the actual game.

Which brings us to actor Richard Hatch (*Battlestar Gallactica*) and his theory of racquetball, which one may even term "Existential Racquetball."

"I think more than any other sport, racquetball develops an extra sense," Hatch says. "When you have four walls and a ball bouncing off it, it uses your coordination in a very complete way. When you play most other sports, you throw the ball and you have five minutes to think in between plays. But when you're constantly involved in doing something, it's a very meditative thing. It becomes an end in itself, so that you're not even conscious of winning or losing. You become so immersed in it that it's an incredible form of relaxation."

Some people who play racquetball realize this, although for many it's still difficult to forget about winning or losing. Spontaneous action is one of the most difficult things to adapt to in modern society in which it seems as if everything is controlled.

"Racquetball does something that's very important in life," says Hatch. "In life, we tend



to want to be in control too much. We stop our spontaneity from happening. We're so on top of things, so in control, that very little that is genuine, real and spontaneous happens. We strike out, we make a move and then we pull back. We make a gesture, or we try to do something, or we get angry, and most of the time we don't follow through with it. We regain control.

"But on the court, you don't have time to think. You're forced to react spontaneously, and it really helps you learn how to break down, how to act and react and trust yourself, knowing that the body and the senses and everything will work perfectly if you allow it to. I don't know what the reaction time of a person is, but it's incredible and the fact of it is that if you trust yourself, you don't have to be in such control, you don't have to be so on top of it, because the body will take care of itself."

And what about the mind?

"I don't think that you can separate the body from the mind," says Hatch. "I think that both come into play, even though it's seemingly just your body out there working. They have learned that by doing certain exercises with the body, certain people who are constricted and uptight and pent up in certain ways hold the body in certain ways. If people do specific exercises to open up their body, they can let air into the body and stretch in certain places in the body. It actually gives their emotional being an expansion, that the body really is an indicator of the rest of the psyche, the emotional and the mental. So all I can say is that anything that requires spontaneous action, like racquetball, I think is really good."

Thus, Hatch says, racquetball is a form of health. "Sometimes all of the wonderful things we have as people are buried underneath the crust, you know, all of that crap. And sometimes we have to get rid of the crap before we get to the gold. Well, in racquetball, you're moving in so many different directions and expanding in so many ways you don't have time to hold onto what's inside you. It's a great way to get a lot of that crap out of you and pretty soon, before you know it, everything that's inside of you, believe it or not, is having a chance to express itself through the motions of playing."

Racquetball, then, for Hatch, is also a creative experience. But so is life.

"What life is all about is our imagination, our creativity," says Hatch. "It's painting our vision, our fantasies, our imagination. Racquetball is a creative experience because there comes a moment when all the technique goes out the window because when the ball is in a certain position, you have not been taught a specific technique to reach that ball, but somehow the body is creative enough to find a way



HATCH

to get that shot. As in life, the body is constantly finding ways to express itself and ways to conquer the challenges that are set before it. It surprises me constantly what our mind, body and soul comes up with in order to find solutions to those challenges. To me, life is all about creativity and getting out of the way of ourselves, not inhibiting ourselves. We need to find ways to step aside so that the creative part of us can get out."

Creativity obviously is not limited to recreational activities, such as racquetball, but should be an all-encompassing aspect of our lives including work. "Working," says Hatch, "should not be a horrible experience. Working should be a very stimulating, fun, enjoyable experience. Unfortunately, it's not at this point for a lot of people. Ultimately, I think as we get to know ourselves better, as we get more in touch with our insides, we start trusting ourselves more. We should not try to emulate other people and be something that we're not.

"One must increasingly challenge himself," says Hatch. "There's only one direction in life so you might as well go for it because you don't have anything to lose."



I think that we will start choosing jobs for ourselves and forms of work that will be much more satisfying to us. Therefore, we won't really need to escape so much. Leisure and work will be one and the same."

This, Hatch claims, will change the nature of sport itself, which usually fulfills the needs of an individual who requires either an emotional release or to get something that he's not getting from his work. But as we begin to find more fulfillment in our work, we'll find different ways of relaxing, ways that are challenging, ways that allow us to participate at our own pace. We develop ways that are less of an escape and are more intrinsically related to developing a sense of peace, of relaxation—indeed, happiness.

"Nobody likes to lie and do nothing," says Hatch. "We want to be challenged. If we don't find challenge in our job, where do we want to find it? In the sports we play. You find something competitive in sport, something challeng-



ing, something to get us excited—all of the things that we should find in our work. If we start to find all that in our work, I think there will be less competitiveness in the sports world and that we will actually get more fun out of playing sports."

Hatch also believes that racquetball is the "ideal sport of the future" because it's played in a limited space, so that even with things like climate changes, air pollution and overcrowding, racquetball should prevail. Hatch is an optimist about our ability to face problems of the future. "Our survival is dependent on all of us working together," says Hatch. "Hopefully we can work out any problems, and we won't be locked into a limited situation where we have few options. But if those options were limited, racquetball would be one of those sports that you could obviously play, because if the air was bad, you could always play inside."

And what about space? Could racquetball be played on a spaceship like the one Hatch occupied on "Battlestar Gallactica"?

"It all depends on how gravity was done in space. If you had little components that propelled you in any number of directions, that would be kind of interesting. I think you have to understand that any sport you take into space would have to be altered and adapted to the environment. It would go through a transformation and become something totally different," says Hatch.

If Richard Hatch has a personal philosophy, and a philosophy to offer to others it may be aptly stated in the phrase, "Go for it. Take a chance on yourself.

"I'm learning in life that we already can do what we know how to do and I think that if we know anything about this life, it's that we need challenges. If we don't find it one way we find it another way. We have two ways to go in life and that is either to challenge yourself or to die. The dying process comes from the boredom that comes from not being challenged.

"People end up taking drugs for kicks and end up taking alcohol to kill the pain. They begin to numb themselves out, to kill themselves. The people who do not challenge themselves ultimately die slowly day by day from boredom and from lack of stimulation.

"So one must increasingly challenge himself. Once he accomplishes one thing, he must challenge himself again. There's only one direction in life and as long as you're going to go in that direction, you might as well go for it because you don't have anything to lose.

"It's like money. If you don't invest money, it devaluates. Same with life. If you don't invest your talents, if you don't stimulate yourself, if you don't challenge yourself, you devalue yourself. So all I can say is that you've got to challenge yourself and you've got to go for it. You've got to put yourself on the line and go for it. Because the most magical thing in the whole world is the human body—the soul, the spirit and the mind, and if you take a chance on yourself, you'll surprise yourself. You'll surprise yourself enough times to keep taking more chances. We have a lot of magic and surprises, and we all love surprises in life. And what better surprise is there than to discover that the surprise is in ourselves."





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The top junior players of today are destined to become the pro stars of tomorrow.

THE NEW BRIEF

By Mike Hogan

If one doesn't live at your house, chances are you haven't heard of them. Racquetball's juniors aren't that visible within the sport.

They don't get much press, and you hardly notice them around the court clubs, most of which, after all, are geared for adult recreation.

But the juniors are out there, working hard, polishing their strokes, and they're getting ready to knock off some of the top pros around.

These juniors have big dreams and aspirations. They are competitive. They like to win. They hate to lose. And, as a group, they exhibit a remarkable unchildlike dedication to the long hours and hard work needed to become champions.

Many of the juniors are so young that Marty Hogan will be considered old and Charlie Brumfield in his dotage by the time they reach the pro ranks. For others, though, a shot at the big time is just around the corner.

The following is a capsule summary of some of the top juniors to watch out for.

While the list is representative of who's who in junior racquetball, it is not intended to be comprehensive. There are too many good players out there and the standings in the junior ranks change too quickly. All players listed are 17 years old or under.

Photos by Carole Charlauros



John Klearman (left) and Greg Peck

JOHN EGERMAN

A junior with, perhaps, the brightest future in racquetball is this 17-year-old from Boise, Ida. He is being compared to another great product of the juniors program, Marty Hogan. A powerfully built natural athlete, Egerman is on his way to developing the same kind of devastating strokes as Hogan. He shows a level of court smarts well beyond his years and is able to play a control game with a slower ball as well as shoot it out with the best of them.

The 1978-79 season was a great one for Egerman. He started it off by capturing the Idaho State Men's Singles Championship while still 16 and moved on to win the International Racquetball Association (IRA) National Men's Singles Championship. In between, he grabbed a first, a second and a third-place finish in the open events of three consecutive pro stops. Ironically, after achieving so much at the adult level, he was tripped up at the IRA Junior Nationals this summer by fellow junior Doug Cohen. But Egerman came back a few weeks later to win the United States Racquetball Association (USRA) National Juniors Championship over Cohen in one of the most exciting matches of the year in any age bracket.

How does he feel about his prospects? "I think I'll do pretty well on the pro tour," he says, "because I'm hungry and there's really no pressure on me. I've got nothing to lose and everything in the world to gain. It's the pros who play me who will be under pressure because they have nothing to gain by beating me and everything to lose."

DOUG COHEN

If Egerman has the best chance making it in the pro rankings, then 17-year-old Doug Cohen is only a half-step behind him. Cohen proved that by taking the IRA National Juniors title away from Egerman and giving him an epic battle for the USRA Juniors Championship. The wiry Cohen lacks Egerman's physical size and strength, but muscles are not a prerequisite for hitting a racquetball hard.

Cohen is a banger in the classic mold of a Jerry Hilecher or a Steve Serot who, like Cohen, are alumni of the famous St. Louis JCCA where serve-and-shoot is king. Cohen holds both the IRA and USRA Midwestern Regional Junior crowns and has given a good showing in open events this year. He even took Marty Hogan to a tiebreaker at the Chicago pro stop. His first year on the pro tour



Liz Alvarado

is going to be a little like "old home week," he says, because he will be going up against some of the same guys he already works out with. There has always been a tradition of older players helping the younger ones at the "J", says Cohen. He plays Serot about twice a week and Ben Koltun three times a week. "But my real competition," he says, "is going to be Eggerman and Scott Hawkins and six or eight other players just as tough who are also trying to get ranked. Qualifying and getting ranked so that I don't have to qualify anymore is going to be the toughest challenge of my career."

How does he plan to go about it? Not with a control-style game, he says, which has never been his forte. "I'm going to rip, rip, rip and go for winners," says Cohen.

LINDA HOGAN

All those unhappy losers who have had more than their fill of this five-letter surname should brace themselves for more bad news: There is another one at home just like Marty.

At the tender age of 16, Linda Hogan of St. Louis is already a four-time national junior champion and will undoubtedly pick up more laurels before moving on to the pros. She has a measure of her brother's power, though not his

deadly concentration yet. A case in point was this year's USRA Girls 17-and-under Championship. Hogan had beaten tough Liz Alvarado for the IRA 17-and-under crown a couple of months before, but stumbled in the USRA semis to newcomer Sheryl Krause who later got rolled over by Alvarado. She can't be expected to win them all, but this young lady comes as close as any female junior ever has. She will make her mark in the pros, if she doesn't decide to concentrate on becoming a veterinarian instead. Hogan is torn, she says, between racquetball and her love for animals, but she will try to balance college and the pro tour after high school.

Although a shy, soft-spoken girl, Hogan isn't the least apprehensive about the top ladies she will have to face. "I want to play them really badly," she says with an impish gleam. "I'm going to try to hit the ball a lot harder and play a real power game because not many of the ladies do right now, not even Shannon (Wright). I want to play her really badly. I couldn't beat her now, but in a year or two..." An interesting prospect.

LIZ ALVARADO

Another sweet 16-year-old, Alvarado quietly stalks the courts in

her oversized high-topped tennis shoes, taking opponents apart with an intense level of concentration usually found only in much older players. As the 1979 USRA Girls 17-and-under champ and IRA 15-and-under champ, Alvarado has long been Hogan's toughest competition. A native of Odessa, Tex., Alvarado has won the USRA and IRA regionals in her age bracket for the past two years and generally dominates Southwest girls racquetball.

Only one thing could keep her from a successful pro career: She is also a champion tennis player. "I would like to be a racquetball professional," she affirms, "but then, it's so much fun playing tennis." Already a five-year veteran of both sports, Alvarado plans to walk a middle road for the time being. It's not unusual for her to compete in a tennis tournament one weekend and a racquetball tournament the next, and win both. She also manages to hold down high grades in school. All-in-all, she is probably the best representative of what was a surprisingly strong Texas contingent at this year's USRA Junior Nationals.

MIKE LEVINE

At 15, Mike Levine is probably the best racquetball player in the

Northeast. A sophomore at Brighton High School in Rochester, N.Y., and that state's men's open champ, Levine recently picked up his first national title by winning the IRA Boys 15-and-under championship. As long as he can remember, Levine has wanted a career as a professional athlete and had set his sights on football at which he also excels.

Because he is of only average size, though, his parents have not been crazy about that idea. "I've given up football and all other sports to concentrate on racquetball," says Levine. "Now I tell my dad that I'm going to be a pro athlete and he believes me." With ambition typical of his fellow juniors, Levine doesn't want to wait forever and is working a couple of hours a day to hasten the arrival of his pro debut. "I want to be the youngest pro ever to join the tour," he says.

JOHN KLEARMAN

Another dedicated pro hopeful and another kill shot student at the St. Louis "J," Klearman eats and drinks racquetball. "I play two to three hours a day," says the 15-year-old USRA Midwest Region champ, "and during the summertime, I'm at the 'J' from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m." All of that hard work has paid off for him in the form of the

BRIEF

USRA Boys 13-and-under championships in 1978 and 1979 as well as finals and semifinals finish this year in the IRA and USRA 15-and-under Nationals respectively.

This year, he says, he will be playing in juniors and men's open events and may even try to qualify for the pros somewhere along the tour. Next year, it's the pros for sure. He feels he already has the strokes, but adds, "Mentally, I need more experience. That's why I would like to go on the pro tour. Even if I lose, it's the experience that counts."

SHERYL KRAUSE

One of the year's biggest surprises is this 16-year-old from Appleton, Wis. Although her only major title is USRA Girls 15-and-under Central Regionals champ, she showed that she has greater promise by beating Linda Hogan in the semis of this year's USRA Girls 17-and-under Nationals. Krause is not a hard hitter and does nothing flashy on court, but her steady control style of play

was enough to upset the defending champ. Krause has used much the same formula against much older women in her region. She finished third in the Wisconsin State Women's Open and fourth in the women's central regionals lately. A straight "A" student, she puts college much higher on her list of priorities than racquetball. "Lately, my dad has been asking me how far I plan to go in racquetball. I really don't know yet," says Krause.

GREG PECK

A member of another great racquetball family, the 16-year-old Peck stands head and shoulders above most of his opponents. At 6-foot-1, he already is bigger than older brother Dave (already on the pro tour) and may have to switch to basketball if he doesn't stop growing. Size hasn't hurt the Texas State 15-and-under champ so far, though. He won both the IRA and USRA 15-and-under Southwestern Regionals this year as well as the same IRA bracket, finishing second in the USRA. In



Sheryl Krause

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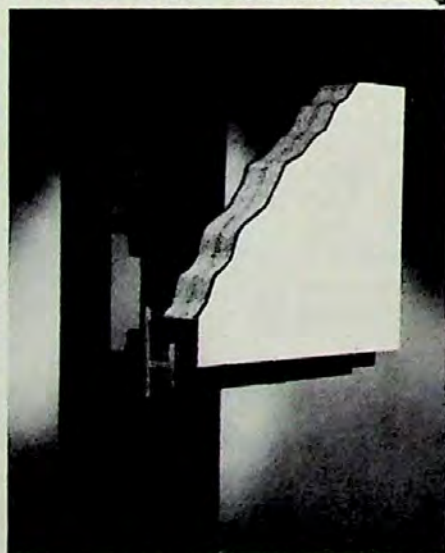
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Bret Harnett and Mike Levine (on ground)

addition, he was a semifinalist at the IRA Junior Nationals and a finalist at the USRA Juniors this year.

An El Paso high school student, Peck can't wait to get to the pros, but he also intends to get a college diploma. He says he knows it will take "a lot of dedication" to carry him to the pros and, in furtherance of his ambitions, he works out four hours a day. "I have the shots and everything," Greg notes, "but sometimes my concentration lapses. I'm going to have to work on that and on my conditioning." How soon before he makes his move? "Soon. I think the younger I try it, the better because I'll have that much more experience."

HART JOHNSON

Amid all of this career certainty and single minded purpose stands Hart Johnson of Minneapolis, Minn., racquetball's Renaissance junior. This 15-year-old has seen a lot of tournament action in the past few years but, while a consistent top finisher, he has yet to put it all together. His problem is that he is too good an athlete. Johnson not only makes most major racquetball tournaments, but also plays on two baseball teams, four bas-

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John Eggerman



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ketball teams and runs cross country during their respective seasons.

Since he also is a straight A student and involved in charitable works back home such as the Heart Association drive, it's not hard to understand why he has trouble getting to the top in what is the toughest bracket in junior racquetball. Johnson thinks that he may find more time to practice racquetball now that he is in high school but he still doesn't plan to give up all else for the sport. "I think it's good for me to play other sports," says Hart. "I get many different experiences. I enjoy them and I don't think it's right to give them up here in the 10th grade to concentrate on racquetball for the rest of my life." A control player in a field of power hitters, he always plays tough and fair.

DAVID SIMONETTE

The littlest angel in the firmament, Simonette, at 11 years of age, spends two or more hours a day playing, practicing and running at the Padonia Court Club near his hometown of Baltimore, Md. He was barely taller than a racquet

two years ago when he first picked one up. Now he is the Maryland State 13-and-under singles champ and the IRA 10-and-under National Junior champ. "It takes a lot of practice and training to be a good racquetball player," he notes sagely. Asked why he doesn't just shuck all this hard work and go out and play like the other kids, he says, "It's not enough."

RAY NAVARRO

Twelve-year-old Navarro has a racquetball trophy for every year of his age, and if he continues acquiring them at his present rate the trophies are going to very quickly outstrip the years. Another El Paso bomber, Navarro has only been playing the game for a year and a half. He won his first national title this summer—the USRA 13-and-under crown. And he owns both the IRA and USRA South-Central regional titles in that bracket. He's not sure how far he wants to go in racquetball. "Right now I just want to keep on winning," he says, adding that he only took up the game in the first place "for something to do." He does it well.

LYNN WOJCIC

"Lucky Lynn" didn't do so well in the IRA 13-and-under National division in Memphis this summer. In the early rounds, she met and lost to the eventual tournament winner,

Donna Allan. So what makes her so lucky? The USRA Juniors were held in the 12-year-old's hometown of Tucson, Ariz., where Lynn picked up the USRA National Junior Girls 13-and-under title.

Other top juniors to watch

Brett Harnett, 15, Las Vegas, Nev.
Donna Allen, 12, Burlington, Ontario
Tina Heath, 14, Chicago, Ill.
Nathan Martin, 13, San Diego, Calif.
Andy Gross, 11, Crevecoeur, Mo.
David Gross, 13, Crevecoeur, Mo.
John Amatulli, 15, Shreveville, Ind.
Leslie Lindskog, 17, Olympia, Wash.
Paul Bakken, 17, Fergus Falls, Minn.
Mona Mook, 15, Redding, Calif.
Lori Burks, 17, Auburn, Calif.
Doug Weisman, 17, St. Louis, Mo.
Beaver Wicham, 17, Oceanside, Calif.
Mark Yellen, 10, Southfield, Mich.
Charlie Horton, 16, Port Chester, N.Y.
Stacy Fletcher, 17, Warren, Mich.
Craig Davidson, 17, Oceanside, Calif.
Ellen Kurland, 17, Rochester, Minn.
Luis Miranda, 12, El Paso, Tex.
Sergio Gonzales, 17, Miami, Fla.

Space does not permit an adequate account of the above youngsters' talents. That is not meant to imply, though, that they are any less deserving of notice than the juniors who were highlighted.

All of them are good and most could hold their own in the adult ranks. Many have already proven that fact to the discomfort of a few once-cocky adult players. **R**

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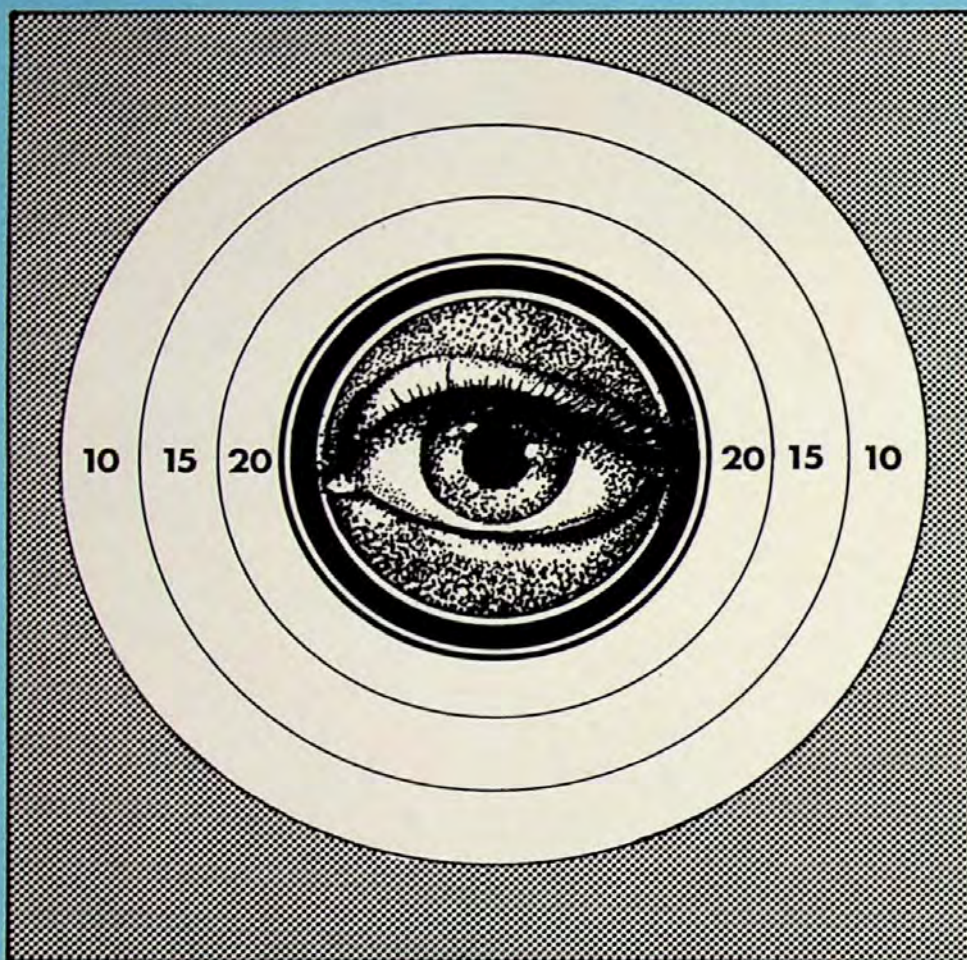
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EYE INJURIES

By Michele Kort

The eye is an amazing organ that connects our brains to the visual stimuli around us. Like a camera, it takes in light images, focuses them, and records them as shapes, colors, and intensities. And like a camera, we must take good care of it if we want to keep seeing and recording the visual world.

Over the past few years, the medical profession has paid increasing attention to the potential of eye injuries incurred while playing racquet sports. Although tennis has received the most publicity, two racquetball players were featured on the cover of the June 16, 1978 issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA). The accompanying article by Drs. Paul F. Vinger and Daniel W. Tolpin, noted that an estimated 3,220 eye injuries were attributed to racquet sports in the U.S. in 1976, and that figure has probably grown tremendously since then, considering the surge in racquetball's popularity the past three years.

Racquetball players run an even greater risk of eye injuries than do tennis players, according to Dr. Stephen Ostbaum, Assistant Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City, because they are not separated by a net and are confined in a smaller, closed space.

The JAMA article made several recommendations about preventing eye injuries, but before exploring them, let's focus on what could happen to the unprotected eye.

The eye is already spared a lot of trauma and injuries by the bony orbit which surrounds it. Objects larger than the bone socket—a volleyball, for instance, could not strike the eye, but a small racquetball certainly could.

If a racquetball missed the eye but struck a surrounding bone, it would probably sting or bruise, but wouldn't create serious damage. If a racquet, however, struck full force in the area around the eye, a painful bruise or cut would be the *least* serious possible damage. An eye or cheek bone might be fractured, and

the additional complications that could occur include damage to the muscles that elevate the eye.

As far as sight itself, a whole range of injuries and complications can take place, depending on the severity of trauma to the eyeball. The clear outer layer, the *cornea*, lets in light to the *iris* (the colored part of the eye), which controls an opening called the *pupil*, which regulates the amount of light that strikes the *lens*, which focuses the light image onto the *retina*, a sensory membrane at the back of the eye. The retina transmits the visual information via the *optic nerve* to the brain.

The least harmful blow to the eye would simply leave a *corneal abrasion*, a scratch which can heal in 24 hours with proper medication and perhaps an eye patch.

If the iris is affected by a blow, it can hemorrhage (bleed), tear or rupture, or contact *traumatic iritis*, a painful inflammation which can lead to other complications. Additionally, the sphincter muscle in the iris, which controls the closing of the pupil, may be torn.

The lens of the eye, located behind the iris and pupil, can be loosened or dislocated by a blow, though it's unusual. Traumatic injuries to the lens may also lead to formation of a cataract, a metabolic disturbance that leaves the lens opaque rather than clear, and may require surgery to remove.

A blunt eye injury can also tear the *filtration angle* that drains fluid from the eye where the cornea and iris meet. If fluid builds up in the eye, either from a tear in the filtration angle, from iritis, or as a result of bleeding in the eye (*hyphema*), *traumatic glaucoma* may be the secondary result. Glaucoma, a condition of high fluid pressure in the eye which damages nerve cells and thus lessens or eliminates vision, may not even appear until 10 or 12 years after an injury occurs.

The retina of the eye—that sensitive nerve-filled membrane that acts like a photographic plate—can also suffer a build-up of fluid as a result of injury. That condition—called *Berlin's* or *macular edema*—can usually be cured with medical therapy, but a recurrence can lead to cysts or holes in the retina. Retinas can also tear or detach under the stress of traumatic injury.

Most of the conditions are painful, annoying, and have the potential for serious after-effects (glaucoma, cataract), but they usually respond to treatment as simple as eyedrops and bed rest.

A *laceration* (cut) of the eye is another story. It is a "serious and significant emergency" requiring surgery, says Dr. Ostbaum. Illustrating the worst that could happen, Dr. Ostbaum recalled a patient he treated whose eye was lacerated so deeply by a squash racquet that he lost it.

Most racquetball-related eye injuries are of the minor and easily-treated variety, according to Dr. Ostbaum and to Dr. Raymond Croissant, a Minneapolis ophthalmologist who became in-



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terested in the topic after seeing a number of injured racquetball players in his practice. (Both doctors vehemently stress the need for players to wear eye protection. Those who need glasses should wear safety goggles with prescriptive plastic lenses, and those players with contact lenses or normal vision should wear the hard rubber eye guard device (which fits around the bony orbit) that is commonly available in racquetball pro shops.

Besides the use of protective eye shields, Vinger and Tolpin suggested in *JAMA* that players can reduce the potential of eye injuries by developing game strategies to avoid being hit and to avoid hitting an opponent. Furthermore, the authors noted that several serious injuries were caused by balls fired in anger or frustration after a point was scored. The message is clear to sore losers. Controlling your temper is an important safety measure as well as good sportsmanship. A final cautionary note from Vinger and Tolpin was that pre-game warm-ups using more than one ball increase the chances of a player being hit.

Drs. Ostbaum, Croissant, Vinger, and Tolpin all concur that safety goggles and eye guards are the only devices that provide players with absolute eye protection. (Preliminary tests re-



ported in the *Jama* article found that eye guards could resist a direct racquet hit by an experienced player.) Regular spectacles, of glass or plastic, are not effective protection because they can break or shatter and cause blunt eye traumas and lacerations to either the skin or, more seriously, to the eye itself. Contact lenses rarely break in the eye, but they are useless as protection because they transmit the impact of a blow directly to the eye.

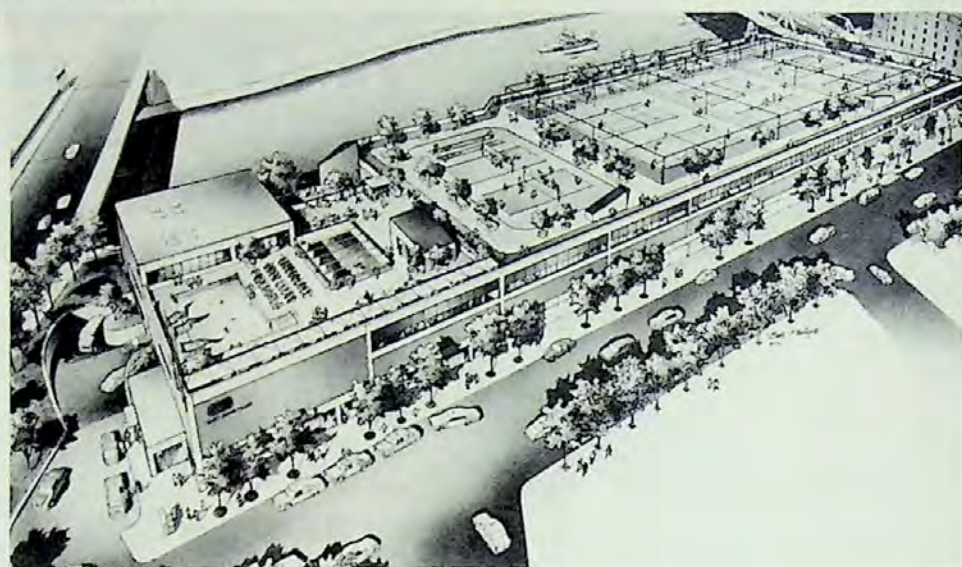
If visions of detached retinas, inflamed irises, and lacerated eyeballs aren't enough to make you rush out to buy eye protection, you probably belong to the school of people who use those famous last words, "It won't happen to me."

If you think you're too good a player to get hurt, you should know that a study published in *Jama* found that experience had no bearing on the number of injuries (only gender did, with male injuries outnumbering female injuries).

Dr. Ostbaum, a racquetball player himself, sees even the best players are now wearing eye protection. "Years ago the people who were big in racquetball were playing without them [eye guards]," he said, "but now I see even Marty Hogan wearing them."

CLUB NEWS

Chicago, Ill.



Construction has begun on the \$15.5 million East Bank Club, which will stretch three blocks long along the Chicago River.

The club, which is expected to be in operation by Fall of 1980, will be located just north of the Apparel Center across the street from the Merchandise Mart.

"Our research showed there is a growing demand for a luxurious in-city club with broadly based amenities in a convenient location," says James P. McHugh of McHugh Levin Associates, the developers. "The scale of the East Bank Club facilities is so varied and of such quality that our members will be able to spend many hours, or even an entire day and

evening, using, relaxing and enjoying the club."

The East Bank Club will feature nine racquetball courts, two squash courts, ten indoor and six outdoor tennis courts, an outdoor and indoor running track, indoor golf center, full-length basketball court, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, exercise rooms, fitness center with Nautilus equipment, a nursery, library, parking garage and the usual health and lounge facilities.

Initiation fees for charter members is \$500 with annual dues of \$250. Family memberships are \$750 with annual dues of \$360.

West Monroe, La.

Racquetball West, a half-million dollar racquetball facility, recently opened on North Seventh Street.

Located adjacent to the City of West Monroe Recreation Center, the club will have six courts, two of which will have glass back walls.

Amenities include whirlpools, fitness center, sauna, meeting rooms, health lounge, television lounge and laundry service.

Charter memberships are \$150 with monthly dues set at \$25 for men, \$20 for women or \$35 for couples. Membership will be limited to 500 people.

The club is owned by Lon and Elizabeth Dunkelmann. Club manager is Rick Cunningham.

Lake Hiawatha, N.J.

It was once called the Knoll Indoor Tennis Club but with the addition of a racquetball complex the official name is now the Knoll Indoor Tennis and Racquetball Club.

Located on Knoll Road, the club has added 12 racquetball courts, two of which are glass

and available for exhibition seating.

There is also a lounge with fireplace, complete gym and health facilities and many different programs for members.

The club is located in a wooded setting near Lake Hiawatha.

Chevy Chase, Md.

The Chevy Chase Athletic Club recently opened its doors with six racquetball courts.

Located on Wisconsin Avenue, the club also features complete fitness (Nautilus) and health club, saunas, whirlpools, sun and steam rooms, lounge and even a clothing boutique.

Club pro is Paul Burden.

New York, N.Y.

Racquetball is making progress in New York City and the latest addition is Skyline Racquetball Club on W. 52nd St.

The club will have five racquetball courts, two tennis courts, 24-hour parking garage, carpeted dressing rooms, exercise and weight room with Universal equipment, mezzanine viewing gallery and a club lounge.

The club is appealing most to a corporate audience.



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Bound to Last



Short Shots

Oh, Clint

Actor Clint Eastwood was a recent spectator at the Boise-Cascade Pro-Am in Boise, Ida., and would often come in to play racquetball or workout on the Nautilus equipment at The Court House.

Needless to say, his presence created quite a stir among the players and spectators who knew he was around.

In fact, during one of matches between two women C players, the two players agreed to call consecutive time outs, so they could have enough time to take a good look at Clint.

After all, what's more important a crummy, old trophy or a quick glimpse of a star?

Hogan In Superstars

Marty Hogan will face a field of a dozen or so other athletes Feb. 5-7 in the Grand Bahama Islands in the finals of the made-for-TV World Superstars competition.

Hogan placed first in his preliminary competition against 12 other athletes to qualify for the finals. He won \$15,500.

Placing first in swimming, tennis, 880 run and bicycle racing, second in bowling and rowing and fifth in the obstacle course, Hogan scored 55 points.

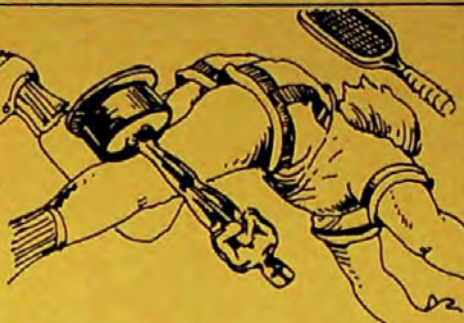
Runnerup was New York Islander's hockey star Brian Trottier, who scored 32 points.

Off To The Big Apple



History, of sorts, was made recently when the Women's Professional Racquetball Association (WPRA) signed a contract with Andrea Nail Color (a subsidiary of Jean Naté) to hold the first all-women's tournament under the sponsorship of the new women's racquetball organization.

The tournament, The Andrea Nail Color-Jean Naté Racquetball Classic, will offer \$10,000 in prize money. It is scheduled for



Racquetball Jinx?

Is racquetball a jinx for Academy Award winners? Probably not but you would never convince Richard Dreyfuss and Jon Voight of it.

Voight, who won the Oscar last year for his performance in "Coming Home," recently suffered torn ligaments in his right ankle while playing racquetball. He was put in a cast, told to stay off it for a period of time, then got so bothered by the cast, he took it off himself.

Dreyfuss, who won an Oscar for his role in the "Goodbye Girl," suffered an injury about a year or so ago while playing racquetball.

He had broken his wrist just prior to the filming of "The Bix Fix," and because producers didn't want to delay shooting, they decided to write-in dialogue concerning the cast on his wrist. The dialogue proved to be some of the best writing of the movie.

Special Olympics

Over 2,000 youngsters were treated to racquetball clinics and exhibitions at the 1979 International Special Olympics at Brockport State University near Rochester, N.Y.

Several of the young athletes were so enamored with the game, they decided to get on the court and try it themselves.

Actress Maureen McCormick ("The Brady Bunch"), a relative newcomer to racquetball, played a few racquetball matches with anyone who was interested, and former baseball superstar Hank Aaron appeared in a racquetball exhibition.

The four-day event was taped for showing by ABC, and other guests included former heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali and actress Susan St. James.

Several racquetball club pros from the East participated in the event. Head instructor was Jim Winterton of Rochester, N.Y.

Fastest Growing Sport



Racquetball is the fastest growing participant sport in the country, according to a survey conducted by the A.C. Nielsen Company.

Participation in racquetball is up 283 per cent over the three-year period from 1976 to 1979.

The Nielsen study shows that there are roughly 10,600,000 racquetball players, which ranks 21st in popularity. Swimming heads the list with an estimated 105,000,000.

Following swimming in popularity are bicycling, camping, fishing, bowling, boating, jogging, tennis, pool and softball.

Racquetball's growth pattern far outdistanced the next most popular sports—platform tennis (120 per cent increase), snow skiing (40 per cent increase) and sailing (19 per cent). Tennis jumped only 10 per cent over the three-year period.

The biggest decline in popularity for participation came in ice hockey (minus 38 per cent).

Jan. 10-13, 1980 at the Centre Court Racquetball Club in Rockville Centre, N.Y.

Announcement of The Big Apple tournament was made by pros Jennifer Harding (left), Janell Marriott, Jean Sauser (right) and WPRA Commissioner Dan Seaton in conjunction with Andrea Nail Color President Stephen A. Tuchman (with beard) and Ellen Schuenger (second from right) of Centre Court Racquetball Club.

TOURNAMENTS

Boise Cascade Pro-Am

By Ben Kalb

To a non-Idahoan, Boise comes across—and somewhat accurately so—as a kind of non-cosmopolitan, semi-cowboy, conservative city that specializes in 119 different ways to cook potatoes.

But to Bob Peterson, director of Boise's impressive Court House, the city is right on the brink of racquetball immortality.

"I want to become the Wimbledon of racquetball," says Peterson, in reference to his annual tournament, which is slowly developing as one of the season's best.

Last year it was called the Idaho Open. This year Boise Cascade came in and it became the \$25,000 Boise Cascade Charity Pro-Am for the benefit of The Special Olympics. Peterson and Boise Cascade have a 15-year, seven figure contract and next year prize money shoots to \$50,000 equally split between men and women.

Peterson's tournament is also one of the few to be selected for television. Last year over 200 PBS stations broadcast the event—some cities as much as five times—and more stations are expected to carry this year's finals.

The Boise Cascade tourney is also one of the most organized and enjoyable affairs with over 200 volunteers to help keep things running smoothly. And, of course, there are the infamous parties every night, which means the local beer distributors make a killing.

About the only thing wrong with the tournament was the ticket prices, which were going for \$75 and \$100 for the entire tourney. At those prices the stadium court, obviously, was never filled. "We made a mistake," said Peterson. "It will be changed next year."

But the most important quality of the tournament was the atmosphere. It was a tournament devoid of political bickering among players from opposing racquetball companies and the emphasis, although on winning, was still one of having a good time.

Said one player, "It's a pleasure to go to a tournament without any of the political bull--- that goes on." Said another player, "The atmosphere is enjoyable. At some of the other tournaments the atmosphere is so thick you can cut it with a knife."

Most of the top-name players participated in the tourney with the notable exception of the players sponsored by Leach Industries (Marty Hogan, Charlie Brumfield, etc.), who according to one Leach player were "advised" by Leach President Charlie Drake not to enter.

Three Leach-sponsored players—Karin Walton, Sarah Green and Jay Jones—showed up anyway.

Second-seeded Mike Yellen won the \$5,000 men's singles first prize with a 21-17, 21-11 decision over Ektelon teammate Dave Peck. Peck, who was bridesmaid to Lindsay Myers in

last year's tournament, took home a check for \$2,500.

Shannon Wright won the women's pro event (\$2,500) with a 21-3, 12-21, 11-3 victory over Lynn Adams (\$1,500). It was the second straight Idaho championship for Wright.

Yellen reached the finals by defeating Larry Myers, 21-2, 12-21, 11-9 in the quarterfinals and David Fleetwood, 21-16, 21-7, in the semis. The victory over Myers was to avenge a first-round defeat that Yellen suffered in the first NRC pro tourney in Chicago.

Peck defeated Davey Bledsoe, 21-6, 21-16, in the quarters and Mark Morrow, 21-14, 11-21, 11-3, in the semis. Morrow had reached the semis with a 19-21, 21-7, 11-1 upset of top-seeded Jerry Hilecher. Fleetwood's spot in the semis came with a 21-20, 21-6, win over Steve Strandemo. Strandemo had an 18-6 lead over Fleetwood in the first game before Fleetwood went ahead 20-19.

In the first game of the Peck-Yellen finals, the lead changed hands four times and the game was tied seven times. Yellen had an 8-5 lead but Peck tied it at 9 and went ahead 11-9. Yellen knotted it at 14 and then drove out to a 17-14 advantage. Peck tied it at 17 but Yellen scored the final four points.

Peck seemed to tire in the second game and trailed 5-0 and 10-3. Peck managed to cut the lead to 12-9 but it soon became 15-9. At 15-11, Yellen reeled off the next six points and the match.

"Sometimes scores aren't an indication of how tough the game is," said Yellen after the match. "I had to play as hard the second game as I did the first."

"He ran me all over the place. I got a little tired," said Peck. "He played better than I that's all I can say. There will be another time and another place."

Wright reached the finals with a 21-3, 21-3

win over Linda Prefontaine in the quarterfinals and a 21-10, 21-10 decision over Janell Marriott in the semis. Adams, who is on the first year of the pro tour and has beaten everybody she faces except Wright, ousted Sarah Green, 20-21, 21-8, 11-4, in the quarters and then upset Jennifer Harding, 21-6, 21-9, in the semis.

Marriott reached the round of four with a 21-20, 21-20 win over National champ Karin Walton in a rematch of the NRC Nationals. Walton had lead 20-17 in both games. Harding's spot in the semis came from a 21-19, 21-11 win over friend Rita Hoff.

Wright had no problem in the first game, jumping out to a 11-2 lead and coasting in. Adams, a little less nervous in the second game, came back to tie things up after pulling away from 8-6 to 15-7. Adams led 20-9 and held on.

Wright never trailed in the tiebreaker, leading 2-0 and 7-2 before winning 11-3. She looked more relaxed than in the second game.

"Even though I lost the second game I was building up momentum," said Wright. "I just tried to keep it going in the tiebreaker."

"There's a lot of things I still need to learn," said Adams. "Part of my game is my intensity and that kind of floated away."

Wright actually almost never made it to the finals, having come close to forfeiting the



Photos by Drew Stoddard

Dave Peck steps into a shot against Mike Yellen in finals of Boise-Cascade tourney in Boise, Ida. won by Yellen. Top: Lynn Adams rolls out backhand against Shannon Wright in women's finals. Wright won in tiebreaker. Finals were televised by PBS.

semifinal match against Marriott. Wright has this idiosyncrasy of never allowing women to officiate her matches. However, she never bothered to tell Peterson of this and Peterson assigned fellow pro Vicki Panzeri to referee the women's semifinal match.

Wright, of course, objected but Peterson stood firm. "She started to walk away but then came back," said Peterson. "I would have forfeited her."

Wright and Adams also met in the doubles finals but this time the outcome was different. Adams teamed with Panzeri to defeat Wright and Walton, 21-5, 20-21, 11-10, in one of the most exciting matches of the tourney. And one of the most aggressive. At times the women looked like four basketball players in the middle of a key fighting for a rebound. Who says racquetball is not a contact sport?

Wright and Walton had a 10-8 lead in the tiebreaker and had actually scored the 11th point before the referee called a hinder on the play. Adams and Panzeri knotted it at 10-10 before Wright skipped a shot, giving the underdogs the title. Adams and Panzeri defeated Jennifer Harding and Jean Sauser in the semis and Walton-Wright won in a tiebreaker over Green and Marci Greer.

The winners split \$500 and the losers split \$300. Wright donated her share to The Special Olympics.

The men's pro finals were won by the teenage team of John Eggerman, a Boise product, and Scott Hawkins of California. They upset Mike Zeitman and Fleetwood, 21-19, 21-18, in another excellent match. The Eggerman-Hawkins matches drew the biggest and loudest crowds of the tourney. The two had never played in a pro tourney together but had spent the summer playing each other in singles and playing local teams in doubles. Eggerman usually teams with Peterson but Peterson had to concentrate on running the tournament and decided not to enter himself.

Eggerman and Hawkins defeated Bruce Radford and Kirk Williams 11-3 in a tiebreaker in the semis and Fleetwood and Zeitman topped Dr. Bud Muehleisen and Peck, 11-4, in a tiebreaker.

Eggerman and Hawkins split \$900 for their title and Fleetwood and Zeitman split \$500.

In the men's seniors, Jay Jones had an easy road to the finals where he defeated Muehleisen, 21-14, 21-5, for the first place prize of \$750. Muehleisen, celebrating his 48th birthday, took home a check for \$350. Jones led 14-0 in the first game and held off a Muehleisen rally. Jones led 14-2 in the second game and coasted in.

In the women's open division, Cathie Jones defeated Gail Allert, 21-19, 13-21, 11-4. In the men's open, Brett Harnett defeated Bobby Stocker, 21-20, 21-9.

In attendance at various times during the week were actors Clint Eastwood and Joseph Bottoms and actress Sandra Locke, who were in town filming a movie called "Bronco Billy."

Kendler Classic



Photo by William Precht

By Ben Kalb

Most of the top male players on the pro racquetball tour can hardly wait for the opening tournament of the season. That is usually when national champion Marty Hogan is most vulnerable to defeat. So, what did the ready-to-be-beaten-non-tournament-tough Hogan do in the 1979-80 curtain raiser in Chicago? What do you think? He won.

Top-seeded Hogan defeated second-seeded Jerry Hilecher, 21-18, 21-15 to take home the \$5,800 first prize in the \$30,000 Robert W. Kendler Classic at the Glass Court in Lombard, Ill.

In the women's finals, Marci Greer won her first pro tournament by defeating good friend and Ektelon teammate Rita Hoff, 21-8, 21-7, for first prize money of \$2,600.

Surprisingly there weren't many incidents in the tournament. The players, with one or two exceptions, kept their outbursts, antics and obscenities to a minimum. And for the most part, the officials did a good job of controlling the matches. The tournament was well run. In fact, security on the glass exhibition court was so tight, Ben Koltun had to go back and get his player's pass before they allowed him in to play his own match.

Although Hogan came away with top honors, it wasn't an easy road getting there. Of his five matches, three went to a tiebreaker.

"I can't remember going to three tiebreakers in a tournament ever before," said Hogan. "But I actually think it helped me. The more court time I had at the beginning helped me."

Marty Hogan hits off-balance passing shot against Jerry Hilecher in finals of Kendler Classic in Chicago. Hogan started tour season off same way he ended last season—with a victory.

"My first tournament is always the roughest because I don't play in many during the summer. But I never felt in danger of losing any of the tiebreakers."

Hogan actually came close to being eliminated in his first match against 17-year-old Doug Cohen, who, coincidentally, plays out of the St. Louis Jewish Community Centers Association, the same early hunting grounds of Hogan.

Hogan won the first game 21-16, eased up in the second and lost, 21-19 and was losing 6-3 in the tiebreaker before he figured out he was cutting things too close. He won the tiebreaker, 11-6.

His second match against Mark Morrow of Los Angeles also went to the third game. Hogan won that one 21-10, 13-21, 11-4.

Hogan then beat Dave Peck in the quarters, 21-9, 21-15 and Rich Wagner in the semis, 21-14, 15-21, 11-6 in a match that had the makings of a junior high after-school alley fight.

Wagner, who is slowly replacing Hilecher as the person most likely to give referees nightmares, argued with the referee or linesmen about every other point. Hogan, not to be outdone by Wagner's antics, joined in the circus and together they put on the worst sideshow in town.

"I made a resolution not to argue," said

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TOURNAMENTS

Wagner. "I guess that didn't last long."

The finals, which some fans feared would be a duplicate of the Hogan-Wagner fiasco, went quite smoothly. There weren't any disputes, just a lot of tough racquetball.

Hilecher led 13-12, Hogan led 15-14, the two were tied at 17 before Hogan outscored Hilecher 4-1 over the next few minutes. Hilecher led 9-6 in the second game before Hogan tied it at 12 and pulled out to an 18-13 lead before winning by six points.

"He (Hilecher) played pretty well," said Hogan. "I knew I had to make him shoot on the run."

"Everybody is afraid I'm going to shoot ev-

erything, so against Hilecher I started to hit more passing shots. By the middle of the first game he was moving back, so I began to shoot more."

Hilecher, who finished second in four tournaments last season, took home \$3,300 for his bridesmaid finish this time. "Actually I was happy I lasted as long as I did," said Hilecher.

Hilecher's semifinal match against Davey Bledsoe was one of the highlights of the tourney with Hilecher winning 13-21, 21-12, 11-10. That was the second straight 11-10 game for Bledsoe, who edged Steve Strandemo by that score in the quarters. Hilecher's 11-8 tiebreaker over Koltun in the quarters was also

one of the tourney's top matches.

There were a couple of surprises in the men's division with Bobby Bolan upsetting Dave Fleetwood, 11-9 in a tiebreaker and Larry Myers shocking Mike Yellen, 21-18, 21-19, in the first round.

The women's division also did not go as expected. Janell Marriott lost in the first round to Elaine Lee, 21-12, 9-21, 11-7. Shannon Wright was upset by Greer in the semis, 15-21, 21-17, 11-5, and Hoff upset defending National Champion Karin Walton, 21-14, 21-1, in the semis.

Most people had expected a close final between Hoff and Greer but it was no contest. Greer was on and Hoff was not.

Greer took a 7-2 lead in the first game, upped it to 19-5 and coasted in. Greer led 12-4 and 15-6 in the second game, allowing Hoff to take home the runner-up check of \$1,600.

"It's usually closer between us," said Greer. "In fact, we usually trade off beating each other. She beat me last season in Denver and I beat her in Los Angeles, so I thought it would be her turn today. I guess I was a little more excited about winning this one."

Greer credits part of her victory to Louie Ruiz, her coach, who has also helped Hilecher out with his play. "He calms me down," says Greer. "He convinces me I am a good player."

Greer's toughest match came in the quarters in which she defeated Sarah Green 21-18, 19-21, 11-8 in one of the most exciting matches of the tourney.

"That was my toughest match," said Greer. "I had to be at my best."

Against Wright in the tiebreaker, Greer led 4-3 before Wright went ahead 5-4. Greer then came back to score the final seven points.

"I wasn't going to let her intimidate me," said Greer. "I was nervous in the first game but I started thinking more and looking at the ball in the second. I think she mentally letdown in the tiebreaker."

Results:

MEN

QUARTERFINALS: Marty Hogan def. Dave Peck, 21-19, 21-15, Rich Wagner def. Charlie Brumfield, 21-19, 18-21, 11-4, Davey Bledsoe def. Steve Strandemo, 21-11, 8-21, 11-10, Jerry Hilecher def. Ben Koltun, 21-16, 5-21, 11-8.

SEMIFINALS: Hogan def. Wagner, 21-14, 15-21, 11-6, Hilecher def. Bledsoe, 13-21, 21-12, 11-10.

FINALS: Hogan def. Hilecher, 21-17, 21-15.

WOMEN

QUARTERFINALS: Shannon Wright def. Lynn Adams, 21-9, 21-15, Marci Greer def. Sarah Green, 21-18, 19-21, 11-8, Karin Walton def. Jennifer Harding, 21-5, 21-4, Rita Hoff def. Elaine Lee, 21-8, 8-21, 11-7.

SEMIFINALS: Hoff def. Walton, 21-14, 21-1, Greer def. Wright, 15-21, 21-17, 11-5.

FINALS: Greer def. Hoff, 21-8, 21-7.

Marci Greer came through with her best pro tournament effort beating Rita Hoff (top) in the finals and Shannon Wright (bottom photo) in the semis.



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TOURNAMENTS

AMF Voit/SELF Magazine (New York)

A small Canadian contingent from Montreal proved to be the ones to beat in the AMF Voit-Self Magazine Racquetball Classic at the Courts of Appeal on Staten Island.

Ross Harvey, 18, who some say could be a fixture on the men's professional tour if he puts his mind to it, defeated Courts of Appeal head pro Ruben Gonzalez, 21-14, 10-21, 11-8, in the Men's Open. Harvey came down from Montreal to participate in the tourney.

Elaine Lee of Pennsylvania won the Women's Open with an easy 21-3, 21-4 decision over Montreal's Lisa Marcus.

To reach the finals, Lee defeated Linda Kennedy of Pennsylvania, 21-10, 21-11, and Marcus defeated Gerry Rodysz of New Jersey. Harvey beat Illinois' Steve Sulli, 21-13, 21-12, and Gonzalez topped Illinois' Jim Scheyer, 21-13, 21-15, in the semis.

Stephen Volk won the Men's B title with a 21-12, 12-21, 11-6 decision over Scott Rogers. Both are from New York.

A back gallery view of 18-year-old Ross Harvey going wide and low to shoot down-the-line pass against Ruben Gonzalez in men's finals of AMF Voit-Self Magazine tourney in New York. Harvey won 11-8 in a tiebreaker.

The Women's B event pitted yet another Montreal player, Louise Lanctot, against Lia Marchini of Hazlett, N.J. with Marchini winning in a tie breaker, 17-21, 21-10, 11-2.

Two Long Island, N.Y. residents battled for the win in the Men's C competition. Bill Hecker of Brentwood edged James Cascio of West Bay Shore in a tie breaker, 21-5, 16-21, 11-7.

In the Women's C final, Renie Sokolowski of Bayside, N.Y. scored a decisive victory over Cathy Welch of Balboa Island, Calif., 21-6, 21-11.

The Men's Seniors event paired Charlie Garfinkel of Buffalo, N.Y. with Bernie Kohout of Morristown, N.J. with Garfinkel scoring an easy 21-11, 21-7 decision.

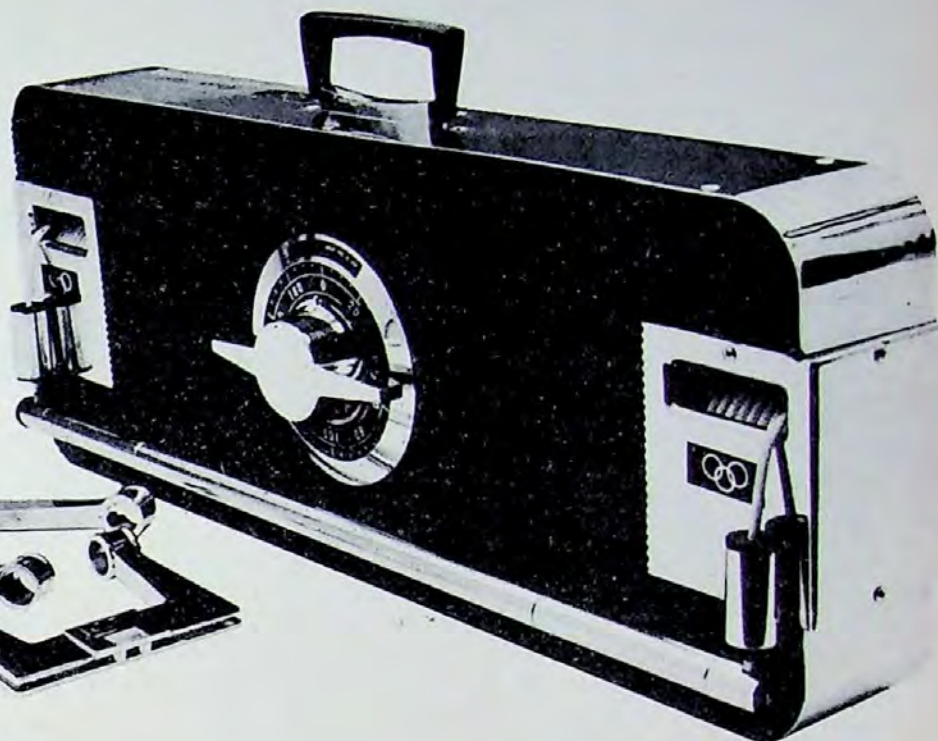
Prizes were provided by AMF Voit, Self Magazine, American Airlines, Conair Corporation, Hitachi, Johnson & Johnson, Racquetball Illustrated, Rollei of America, Inc., Seligman & Latz, Jovan, Inc., Danskin Traskin, Robert Bruce Sportswear, and Tred 2.

Over 380 players participated in the event.



Photo by Tony Carannante

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AMF Voit/SELF Magazine (Detroit)

Dave Peck defeated Lindsay Myers, 12-21, 21-15, 11-4, in the finals of the AMF Voit-Self Magazine tournament at the Franklin Racquet Club in Southfield, Mich.

Peck advanced to the finals by beating Michigan's Larry Fox, 21-19, 21-12 and Myers earned his berth with a convincing 21-17,



Dave Peck kills one from backcourt in semifinal match against Larry Fox in Voit-Self tourney in Southfield, Mich. Photo by Shep

21-6 decision over unseeded Tom Travers.

In the women's division, top-seeded Pat Schmidt defeated Irene Ackerman, 21-7, 21-5. Schmidt, a product of Wisconsin, defeated Donna Henry, 21-5, 21-17, in the semifinals. Ackerman, of Dearborn, Mich., beat Judy Hukta, 21-12, 21-10.

In the senior division, Fred Lewerenz defeated Ron Johnson, 21-6, 21-5. Lewerenz defeated Tom Perna and Johnson defeated Don King in the semis.

Bret Williams won the men's B with a 21-

16, 21-16 victory over Tom Hamilton. Donna Allen defeated Linda Sleep, 21-4, 21-11, in the women's B competition. Howard Sher defeated George Hobbs, 21-7 21-12, in the men's C and Christine Belleau defeated Catherine Thompson, 21-19, 21-17, in the women's C division.

Over 300 players from Canada, New York, Ohio, Michigan, California and Texas participated in the tournament.

All quarterfinalists and above qualify for the Voit-Self Nationals, Dec. 14-16 in Las Vegas.

Etc.

- John Knauer defeated two-time Indiana state champion Ron Johnson, 21-5, 8-21, 11-4, to win the men's open division of the WNAP/Karma Circle City Open in Indianapolis, Ind. The tourney was held at Racquetball East, West and South.

- Clark Pittman defeated Kevin Deighan and Becky Callahan defeated Julie Selm in the open finals of the USRA Ohio State tourney at Circuit Courts in Dayton.

- Tony Upkes of Lincoln, Neb. defeated Ted Podgorny of Kansas City in the men's open competition of the Lite Beer tourney held at Jefferson City Racquet Club in Jefferson City, Mo. Mary Herling of St. Louis won the wom-

en's open by defeating Anne Wyrick.

- John Kubasek of New Westminster, B.C. defeated defending champion Wendell Talaber of Vancouver, B.C., 21-9, 10-21, 11-8, in the men's open finals of the Summer Madness II tourney at Family Fitness Center in Tacoma, Wash. Lee Jew, of Olympia, Wash. who is pretty close to turning professional, defeated Leilani Olbu, 21-10, 21-16, in the women's finals.

- Rick Legue, 33, has been named president of Follett Recreation Companies, Inc., which operates five racquetball facilities—four in Illinois and one in Florida.

- Ted Steinmeyer has been named sales and marketing director for Viltter Sports.

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Lauren Cayne goes down the spiral slide in a white with blue trim "tank top," **\$12**. The matching speed shorts, also half polyester and half cotton, sell for **\$12**.

LANG





Terese also prefers the white top with navy blue "Dual Stripes," a poly-cotton combo, **\$18**. Matching speed shorts sell for **\$12**. Lauren relaxes in a Lang poly-cotton "tube top," **\$12** and straight shorts, also at **\$12**.

Terese Heston does her racquetball playing and flying in a smart-looking White "V-Neck" top with green trim, **\$14**, also a poly-cotton combo. White straight leg shorts, **\$12**, can be sold separately.



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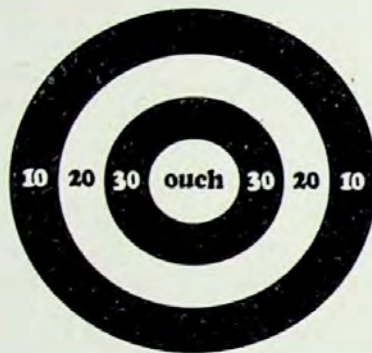
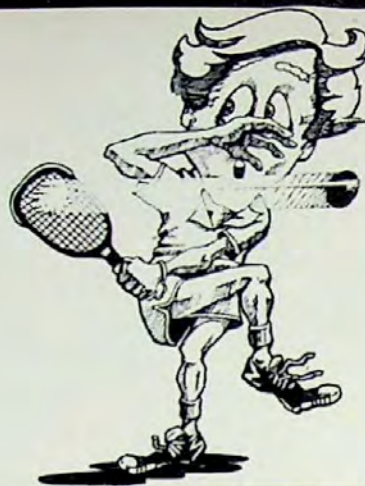
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Sports Illustrated Court Club 3
6529 South Westledge
(616) 323-0011

Port Huron
Courtrooms West
3403 Lapeer West
(313) 987-8700

Port Huron
Huron Court Club
2900 Kraft Road
(313) 385-4469

Rochester
The Rochester Courts
950 W. University Drive
(313) 652-1510

Roseville

Rose Shores East
Racquetball, Inc.
31950 Little Mack
(313) 296-2200

Saginaw
Sports Illustrated Court Club 7
2717 Schust Rd.
(517) 321-1430

Southfield
Southfield Athletic Club, Inc.
26555 Evergreen
(313) 296-2200

Springfield
Sunshine Racquetball Club
3534 E. Shushine
(412) 883-4800

Sterling Heights
Parkside Racquet Club
42140 Van Dyke
(313) 254-1012

Sterling Heights
Sports Illustrated Court Club 12
42140 Vandyke
(313) 254-1012

Trenton
Racquet King Courts
1630 Fort Street
(313) 676-5850

Ypsilanti
Sports Illustrated Court Club 1
2111 Golfside
(313) 434-2111

MISSOURI

Creve Coeur
The Racket Man, Inc.
11048 Olive Blvd.
(314) 567-0873

Springfield
Sunshine Racquetball Club
3534 E. Sunshine
(417) 883-4800

NEVADA

Carson City
Capitol Courts, Inc.
3448 Bernese Court
Carson City, Nevada
(702) 882-9566

Las Vegas
Las Vegas Sporting House
3025 Industrial Road
(702) 733-8999

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Off The Wall Racquet Club Inc.
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Off The Wall Racquetball Club,
Inc.
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(603) 431-1430

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Club
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(505) 526-4427

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Charlotte
Sports Illustrated Court Club 17
5501 77 Center Drive
(704) 527-0975

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

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Carolina Courts
1207 Front St.
(919) 832-5513

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Highwoods Racquetball Club
2912 Highwoods Blvd.
(919) 876-3641

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of Winston Salem
301 Executive Park Blvd.
(919) 765-0691

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Kangaroo Courts
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Chatham Squash and
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Yogi Berra's Hall of Fame
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(201) 227-4000

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& Health Club, Inc.
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(201) 531-9300

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Health Club
Randolph Park West
(201) 328-0660

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(201) 753-2300

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Racquetball of Tom's River
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(201) 349-6100

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Atlantic Ave. bet. Rt. 35
& Rt. 34
(201) 223-2100

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Racquetball International
342 Paterson-Hamburg
Turnpike
(201) 942-9400

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Eagle Roc Court Club
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(201) 731-9696

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Racquetball Club
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(716) 833-5226

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580 Cayuga Road
(716) 632-1984
Cedarhurst
Executive Courts West
395 Pearsons Avenue
(516) 239-3500

Dewitt

Dewitt Clubhouse
Widewaters Parkway
(315) 466-0376

Happauge
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230 Oeser Avenue
(516) 249-0828

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

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Meadows Clubhouse
4989 Hopkins Road
(315) 451-5551

New York
Manhattan Squash club
1114 Ave. of Americas
(212) 869-8969

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

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

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(313) 689-5415

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Courtland Racquetball
45100 Mound Rd.
(313) 254-1056

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Health 'n' Sports
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(516) 996-8855

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3328 West Genesee Street
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Mandball Fitness World, Ltd.
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(614) 451-1930

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Countryside Racquetball &
Handball
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(614) 885-BALL

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Racqueteer Club
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(614) 864-7676

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Dayton
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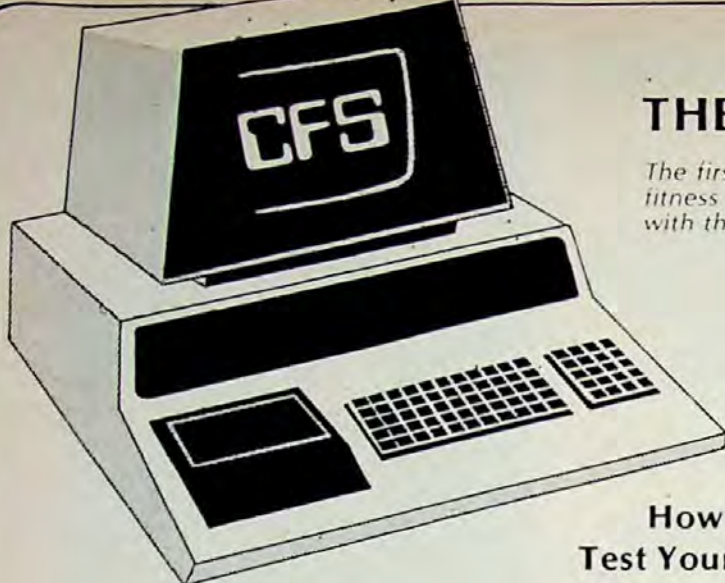
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The first computerized Fitness System that gives you fitness tests, provides a fitness prescription, and follows your members progress while providing you with the industry's ultimate edge against competition.



Your Best Employee

The fitness conscious adult has now come to expect more from the health and sporting club. They want a well designed fitness program. A program that will increase their cardiovascular health and reduce their risk for heart attacks. They want a program that will reduce that body fat and trim up those sagging muscles. But before you can give them such a program they have to know how fit they are.

The major thrust of the health and sporting club industry is the setting up of fitness programs for it's members. But fitness testing, the prescription of programs and the follow-up take a great deal of time and expertise. The club manager is no longer expected to just handle sales and organization now he's being asked to be an expert in exercise physiology. And in most cases, this is impossible.

But now your members can have their fitness tested in five separate categories by a computer. Which computer will then tell them what kind of shape they're really in. More than this, the Computerized Fitness System will provide a prescription which is personalized for each member. And then the computer will keep track of their progress and help your members to continue their program in your club.

Perhaps the best feature of the Computerized Fitness System is as a sales and promotion tool. Clubs that have the ability to give testing, prescribe programs and help their members continue with the help of the computer have a distinct advantage over their competitors.

When you consider what it costs to have an employee to handle fitness programs, the Computerized Fitness System is an unbelievable asset. You could have the foremost authority in health and fitness but people go to the club that has the Computerized Fitness System.

How the Computer Test Your Members Fitness

The Computerized Fitness system is the culmination of software developed by TOMAR Fitness Systems and hardware from Commodore. There are seven tests that the computer runs on each of your members. They involve cardiovascular fitness, body fat levels, a risk factor analysis for heart disease, two tests for muscular function and two tests of flexibility.

All the tests are conducted with the Computerized Fitness System and are fun for your members. For the test of cardiovascular fitness, the computer has your member stand up and down for three minutes while monitoring his heart rate. For body fat levels it has them get pinched. For the risk factor analysis, it asks questions. And in the tests for muscular function and flexibility, the computer has your member perform simple yet exacting exercise movements.

The tests that the computer gives are from the most recent investigations on fitness and health and are easy to take. Your member follows simple instructions and touches his toes, pinches his stomach or does whatever the computer asks. And these tests have been geared for the whole family but primarily for the adult member.

• BODY COMPOSITION •

NAME: John Franklin

ANALYSIS

HEIGHT: 5 FT. 8 IN
 WEIGHT: 170 LBS.
 FAT WEIGHT: 48 LBS.
 LEAN BODY WEIGHT: 170 LBS.

RELATIVE FAT: 19%

IDEAL WEIGHT: 200 LBS.

You need to lose 10 pounds.

The computer prints out precise information on body composition.

How the Computer Interprets Tests and Prescribes A Fitness Program

After your member has taken the tests he will be provided with a "Personal Fitness Program." This provides a hard copy of the results of the tests he has just taken. It also interprets his test scores. It'll tell him exactly how he did and what it means. He will then be given a prescription based on his ability to exercise. He'll be told how to take his heart rate and you will provide the type of exercise. Whether you offer weight training or racquetball, jogging or tennis, the prescription will fit right in with your program and your facilities.

The prescription will also explain the MET scoring system. This allows your member to keep track of his progress. A MET, very simply is a unit of energy. When the body is at rest the body uses a certain amount of oxygen. This level is deemed as 1 MET. As your member becomes more active his body uses more oxygen. Based on test scores your member is given a weekly MET point level to reach. It makes the intangibles of exercise tangible. It gets them going and keeps them going.

More importantly, it allows them to participate in any type of exercise that you and your facility offer. It makes your program a better one.

A Sales And Promotion Tool

As a sales and promotion tool the Computerized Fitness System will attract prospective members. Consider what your club is in business for. You want to promote health and fitness. You make promises to trim your members up and to show them how to stay fit. The Computerized Fitness System will bring in prospective members because you will have shown them how far advanced you are in the science of fitness. Clubs that have the ability to give testing for a small fee or as a promotional move to help the member begin and continue his program with the use of a computer have a distinct advantage over their competitors. And if the computer is not in use as your fitness director it will control inventory, reserve court space and play a variety of games.

Due to recent advances in Computer technology the Computerized Fitness System is very inexpensive. It can pay for itself with the first week. But if having a "computer" appears to be an extra expense, consider what the cost of an employee to do this testing would be. Consider the number of members who will join just because of your "Computerized Fitness System." Consider your competition. They'll be using the system soon enough. When you consider the advantages of having the Computerized Fitness System in your clubs also consider the disadvantages of not having it.

To order your COMPUTERIZED FITNESS SYSTEM, send \$1495.00 (Florida residents please add 4% sales tax) to the address below or credit card buyers may call

• COURT RESERVATIONS •	
8:00	8:30
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• RISK FACTOR ANALYSIS •

1. How many hours do you sleep each night?

A. (4-6) B. (7-8) C. (9-12)

2. A. YOUR ANALYSIS

Sorry, you rate poorly. Most people sleep between 7 and 8 hours a night. These people are the most healthy. Those sleeping 9 hours or more have the most illnesses. But those sleeping 6 hours or less have the poorest health. Get more rest.

The computer analyzes your members risk of heart disease.

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

Oklahoma City
Racquet Time Courts
6701 Wilshire Blvd.
(405) 721-9205

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Court Sports I
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(503) 687-2811

Eugene
Courtsports II
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(503) 687-2255

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Medford Superior Courts
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(503) 772-3194

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(503) 659-3834

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RD 2 Scotch Valley Rd.
(814) 696-3837

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Mill Creek Park
355-2700

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1845 William Penn Way
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Second Street Pike &
Jaymor Rd.
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(206) 767-4400

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(509) 838-8511

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(206) 352-3400

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(414) 251-1420

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(414) 782-6121

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(414) 351-2900

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

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(414) 321-2500

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(414) 544-4111

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OFF THE WALL

Three ways
to use a
racquetball racquet:



1 As a hat



2 As crutches
for Paul Williams



3 As a watermelon
de-seeder

illustrations by Ted Cochran, idea by Michael Colin

THE NEXT SHOT....

For February, in honor of Valentine's Day and a special Shoe Review section, we present our first "Heart and Sole" issue featuring:

The Shoe Review

A section on racquetball shoes and what to look for when buying them.

Mike Yellen

An in-depth look at the player who finished second in The Nationals.

Court Strategy

Jennifer Harding and Jean Sauser finish off their four-part series.

The Man From The Mafia

A unique story on a hired killer-turned born-again Christian, author, actor and racquetball fanatic.

Play It Outdoors

Lynn Adams gives tips on how to play three-wall racquetball.

Plus:

More instruction, tournament coverage from around the country and one of those clever covers we always come up with to illustrate the theme of our issue.

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At Calf . . .
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☐ White w/Green Stripe

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☐ Blue

☐ Green

☐ White

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CITY _____

STATE _____

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