

National Racquetball

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3 • \$1.00 • MAY, 1976

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE U.S. RACQUETBALL ASSOCIATION

- 12 PAGES OF INSTRUCTION
- INTERVIEW WITH KATHY WILLIAMS
- HOGAN, WAGNER WIN PRO STOPS



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National Racquetball

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On The Cover:

Front wall glass is here! The gorgeous court featured on our cover is the three-walled glass championship court at the Northwest Suburban Y.M.C.A. in Des Plaines, Illinois, just northwest of Chicago. Perfect viewing, perfect for television, perfect for playing.

—photo by W. C. Martin

National Racquetball magazine will pay \$25 to the author, upon publication, of any instructional, feature, or first person racquetball article submitted. All articles must conform to the specifications outlined in the table of contents and are subject to revision, alteration or rejection by the editor. Photographs of high quality in color or black and white are welcomed.

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Dreams Do Come True

In a world so dedicated to material, rather than spiritual thinking, many basketball fans may have missed the pearl that concluded a newspaper editorial on Indiana's amazing national collegiate victory. Hoosier center Kent Benson, who had played since January with torn ligaments in his left wrist, gave much of the credit to his faith in God.

"Believing in God gives me the strength to play as hard as I can," he said. *"You see, what I am is God's gift to me. And what I make of myself is my gift to God."* Truly an inspiring thought by a superb athlete.

It made me also realize that what I am is God's gift to me. And that among His gifts are racquetball and handball. They have enriched my life and the lives of many around me without measure. What I make of them is my gift to the sports.

Like every one of us, I dream of things to come. Like glass walls and portable courts. Long ago I found out it is not easy to change habit. But in 1943 I took the first step toward making a reality of my most demanding dream,—when I installed glass walls at the Town Club in Chicago. I call this the first step, because my ultimate dream has always been a court with the front wall of glass as well as the side and back walls. I was certain that front viewing offered a dimension that is entirely new and absolutely necessary if the full

measure of the sport is to be realized. A glass front wall was out of the question in the space I had available. As the years went on, however, I convinced other owners to try glass in any form. Here I felt lay the future of the court sports,—and history has verified this stand.

Thirty-three years is a long time to wait for your dream to come true. But I waited and at long last a new day for the court sports has dawned: The Northwest Suburban Y.M.C.A. in Des Plaines, Illinois and the Wall Street Court Club in Sacramento, California have both finished courts with front walls of glass. The Northwest court also features the back wall and one side wall glass making it the top spectator court in the country.

I hope all of you will visit these fine facilities and see what dreams are made of. Not just glass, but thousands of spectators to give our favorite pastime the recognition it so surely deserves. And television, which can no longer deny us the airways for lack of an adequate showcase.

That's not all dreams are made of. Nothing happens unless you have a Chuck McClellan, who sparked the task in Des Plaines, along with a Board of Directors who had the



courage to tackle a million dollar addition to what was already the largest Y in the world. Or a Greg Flessing, whose dynamic approach to the court club business convinced his partners that front wall glass was the way to go in Sacramento.

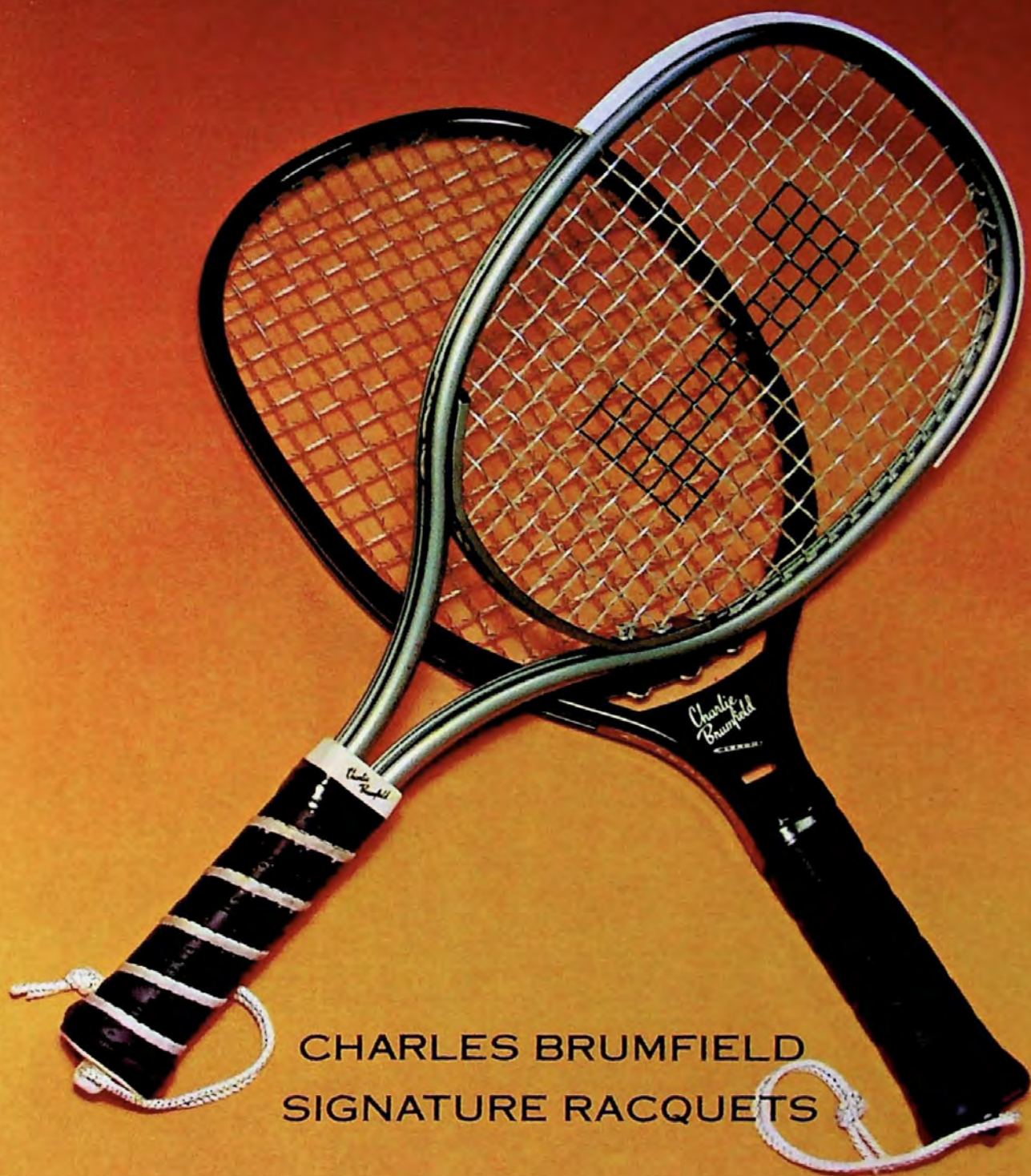
I suppose all wives are alike,—they never stop praying that Papa's dreams will come true. I know my little sweetheart Evie has prayed for my dream with all her heart and the whole family knows it. Imagine my surprise one day when my daughter Kim said, *"Dad, why don't you ask God to help with the glass court?"* I turned to Kim and said, shaking my head, *"Honey, Mom is more devout than I am, if He won't do it for her, He certainly won't do it for me."*

I think he did it for all of us...the racquetball players as well as the handball players.

Thanks Mac
Thanks Greg

Bob Kendler

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Chalk Up Another One



Hard to believe, but as you and I read these words, only the National Championships remain for the 1975-76 season. That racquetball has made great strides this season would be the understatement of '75-76. And although specifics would be premature, perhaps you will enjoy a preview of '76-77.

The N.R.C. and U.S.R.A. have not only solidified their positions as racquetball's top promoters, but we have also succeeded in making improvements and innovations that benefit everybody. And we'll be doing much more next season.

Exactly how much more depends a great deal on our sponsors. At this time we are negotiating with these firms, explaining our needs to continue to organize and run this sport for the greatest good of all players. Of course, this takes money. So, until our sponsorship contract are signed, we don't really know what we'll have to work with.

But we've got some ideas. For openers, we will expand our amateur program greatly. The state chapters of the U.S.R.A. will be a solid fixture for the coming season and the crucial base from which racquetball's robust future will come.

The states will have direction, guidance and help, both financial and material from the U.S.R.A. In return the states will organize, promote and run racquetball in

their areas for the benefit of all. This will take the form of more tournaments, greater emphasis on women and juniors and a co-ordination of tournament scheduling, ranking and officiating.

We plan to have more regional tournaments, expand our trip to the Nationals for winners program, do up the National Juniors in super fashion again and bring our program north of the border to Canada.

The pro tour will be expanded, depending on the available funds with the initial increases going toward women's racquetball. We realize the gals have been playing for less than expenses and it is now time to make the pro tour a viable activity for them as well as the men. But we won't stand pat on the male side and we expect to increase the prize money so that round of 16's can afford to make all the stops.

National Racquetball magazine will continue to be the guiding light to bring the current news to the entire racquetball community. We will continue to present all material in a modern, readable and attractive manner. You can expect a great deal more instructional material in months to come, more interesting features and interviews as well as exciting tournament results.

We've started a classified advertising program to service the court club owners and prospective managers and teaching professionals. The court club area will continue to be the striving force toward the encouragement of new players to take up our game, and we will give the clubs their due within our pages.

And we couldn't forecast the 1976-77 season without touching that elusive subject,—television. The powers that be in network sports are beginning to sit up and notice the waves racquetball is making within the sports world. Now that front wall glass is a reality (see page 29), we are turning our efforts to television once again with renewed vigor.

And one final word to those 20,000 or so members out there. Our sincere thanks,—for it's been your support over the past three years that has made all of our efforts worthwhile. We will continue to promote racquetball every minute of every day on your behalf.

There is only one official racquetball.



The Seamco 558. Official racquetball of the United States Racquetball Association.
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SEAMCO 

San Diego— Here We Come



Ten months ago when I traveled to San Diego and began discussing with Jerry Sandstrom the possibilities of his Atlas Health Club hosting the 1976 U.S.R.A./N.R.C. National Championships, I felt all along that here was a site and organization that would really do a job for racquetball.

Well, the Atlas people haven't let us down, and I am enthusiastic as can be about the prospects of a tremendous Nationals there June 13-19.

Hospitality, amenities, convenience, organization, lovely weather, and camaraderie all will be on hand in San Diego. And from what they tell me out there, I won't want to leave. Well, I might just take a few days to recover from what will undoubtedly be the biggest and best Nationals we've ever put on,—and I might say that our staff could use a few days off.

It's been a truly remarkable and successful season. Every one of our pro tournaments was a rousing success, our amateur regionals are going strong with record entries, we're organizing the states and finally doing something for them, and look at *National Racquetball* magazine! Is there a better sports buy for \$3 a year?

What is most heartwarming to me is the success of the youngsters on the tour this season, the kids in whom we have put our trust to carry racquetball's torch for the next

decade. As the Wagners, Hogans, Serots and others continue to choose racquetball as the athletic outlet for their natural skills, our game will continue to grow in quality as well as quantity.

The season has been a lot of hard work for a lot of people, but our thanks start immediately with our sponsors, namely Seamco and Leach. Seamco's balls are the best in the business,—bar none. The two ball can, which revolutionized the racquetball ball business has had an enormous impact on the game by standardizing the ball situation, both in liveliness and longevity. And through your support of us through your purchase of Seamco balls, we are able to expand our program to bring even more benefits to the racquetball public.

As you probably know, not one cent of our royalty money goes into pro racquetball, which is donated 50/50 by Leach and Seamco for tour prize money. That they are satisfied with their investment is proven by the fact that we are currently negotiating for even more income next season.

Our hosts have been magnificent all year, and we will visit many of them again next season. It is not an easy chore to host one of our major

events,—it takes months of planning, organization and a dedication found nowhere else but in racquetball.

So now the season culminates with the National Championships. San Diego will be a fitting finale to a perfectly great season. Each year it becomes more and more difficult to outdo the previous year, and each year, when it happens, I thank all you wonderful racquetballers who have made it happen.

As I've said so many times before,—the Nationals, like any other tournament is for the "losers." There will only be a dozen or so tourney winners in San Diego but there will be hundreds of losers Sunday through Friday. Our goal is to make sure that every one of those competitive losers goes home a racquetball winner,—in camaraderie, hospitality and just plain old fun.

We'll see you there!

ATLAS HEALTH CLUB RACQUETBALL CAMP

Located in exciting Mission Valley is San Diego's newest and most exclusive health club facility, the Atlas Health Club. The Club in conjunction with Leach Industries offers 4 days and 4 nights/20 hours of instruction in racquetball. Instruction by 3 of the nation's top pros: Charlie Brumfield, Steve Keeley, and Steve Serot

Charlie Brumfield

Charlie is a 27 year old lawyer, resident of San Diego. Known as "Mr. Modesty" in the racquetball world, Charlie is the 1975 National Champion and started out the 1976 pro season with a \$1500 first place win. He is a 3 time National Champion; 2 time National Canadian Champion and is the top money winner in pro racquetball.

Steve Serot

Steve is 19 years old and a resident of San Diego. Usually in the top 4 in pro competition. He is the #2 money winner on the pro tour, and was the 1st pro to win a pro tournament.

Steve Keeley

Steve is a 27 year old veterinarian, resident of San Diego. He is a purest in style. He was a national champion paddleball player when he switched to racquetball. Steve has written 2 books and several articles on racquetball and is the third highest money winner on the pro tour.

These pros believe in both the practical and theoretical approach to teaching. Court time consists of applying classroom knowledge and concepts to the game. The Atlas Health Club Racquetball Camp is designed to utilize the best teaching and most successful techniques developed by the pros. Sign up today for a "no nonsense" learning opportunity that you can't afford to pass up.



Package Includes:

- Room accommodations Atlas Hotel's Mission Valley Inn in San Diego
- Cocktails and Banquet
- Zoo/ari and Sea World passes
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- 20 hours instruction
- Pros subject to change

SESSION 1 July 6th thru 9th
SESSION 2 July 13th thru 16th

PLAN 1	
Double Room Occupancy, Both Persons Participate in the Camp	\$200.00 per person
PLAN 2	
Double Room Occupancy, One Person Participates in the Camp	\$250.00 camp participant \$ 50.00 no participant
PLAN 3	
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FAMILY PLAN: No charge for children under 12 same room using existing bedding. \$5.00 per child over 12 years old. Tour coupons available for children upon request. Extra night rates available upon request.

ATLAS HEALTH CLUB RACQUETBALL CAMP APPLICATION

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APPLICATIONS AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO START OF CLINIC.

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CHECK PLAN DESIRED

- ☐ Plan I
☐ Plan II
☐ Plan III

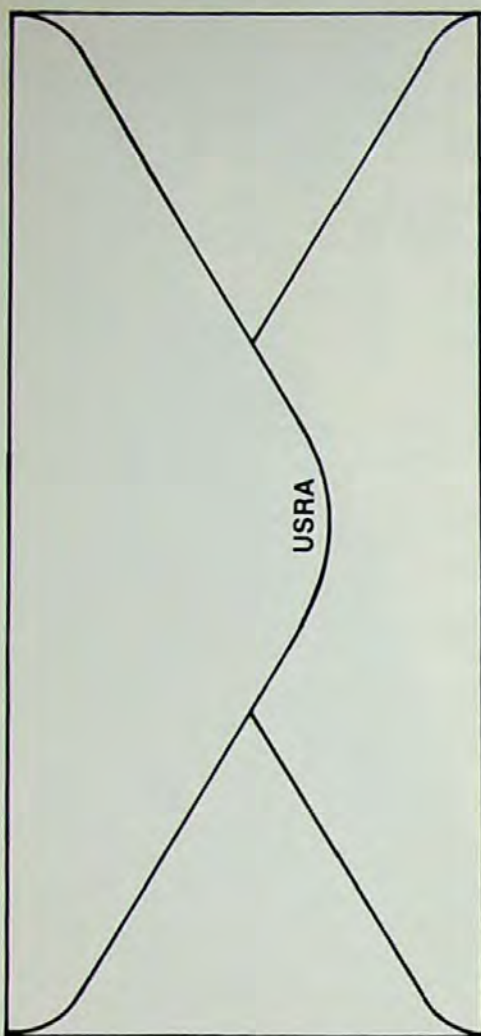
DATE DESIRED:

- ☐ July 6th-9th
☐ July 13th-16th

YOUR DEPOSIT OF \$100 MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION...

Make Checks Payable To:

Mail To: Atlas Health Club 901 Hotel Circle San Diego, CA 92138 298-9321



Dear Chuck and Joe:

Thank you for bringing the N.R.C. Seamco-Leach Pro-Am Racquetball Tour to Buffalo March 25-28.

The tournament was more than we ever could have hoped for. Your organization of the events was exceptional and the matches were unbelievable. The 11 point tie-breaker made the matches even more exciting.

This tournament re-inforced our belief that racquetball will soon be THE number one sport in the nation both as a participation sport and a spectator sport.

We believe that the N.R.C. Pro Tour will be one of the biggest contributors to the overall growth of the game.

Thank you for the confidence you showed our organization by allowing us to host such a fine event.

John Doyle, President
Four Wall Courts, Inc.

Dear Sirs:

Thank you for the free copy of your magazine. Enclosed please find a check for seven dollars for a three year subscription. I'm almost ashamed to admit that I was not aware of your publication. We look forward to future issues.

We have included a unit on racquetball every year for our seniors and it is always very popular. Many of them have gone on to play it in college and the service. Out of necessity we play the one wall game and it is in this area that we could use any help you can give us. Have you published any articles on one wall racquetball and if so could we possibly obtain back issues? If not, would you be interested in an article including pictures on one wall racquetball at the high school level?

Having read the first issue of your magazine (Nov. '75) I'd like to offer a few comments and would appreciate your reactions to them. The article on racquetball in Oregon states that the scarcity of

courts seems to be a problem in many areas. I would imagine moreso as you move away from the population centers. I suppose the four and three wall players would not agree but it seems to me that the greatest potential for the widespread growth of racquetball lies at the local level utilizing one wall courts which are readily available. For example, our case will give a good illustration. The high school gym has a folding door partition which lined off with tape makes two perfect courts with plenty of side room for safety. There are two courts of course available on the other side of the gym as well as others if the town has a separate junior or middle school.

This certainly brings the game of racquetball within reach of everyone, perhaps to a greater extent than tennis. Our town has more racquetball courts than tennis as I'm sure is the case in many towns. Our courts are presently used quite often at night by the community.

I feel this should be emphasized and promoted. You may wonder why we do not purchase available side walls and play the three wall game. At their current price few school districts in this day will do so. Although I've been away from the four wall game for several years I realize many players might not consider one wall worthwhile. I'm sure you would agree as have many players I've talked to that it is a fine workout and should be promoted more than it is.

Excuse me for rambling on, but I thought you might be interested in our situation. Once again if you have any materials or suggestions that would help our program we would be most grateful. Thank you.

James Quigley
Towanda, PA

Dear Chuck:

On behalf of the Evanston Court Club I would like to thank you and the Illinois State Racquetball Association for the opportunity to host the Illinois State Racquetball Singles Tournament. Under your capable direction we were not only able to adhere to our schedule, but to hold numerous matches ahead of schedule. The suggestion of the third game, 11 point tie breaker certainly was a most instrumental tool in maintaining the tournament matches on schedule. Not only did it shorten the length of the matches, it created exceptionally exciting third games.

All of us who worked on the tournament, my assistant, Dottie Trauscht, and the Club's floor managers, Tim Plum, Jim Harper and Tony Arneri as well as the tournament's referees, Al Barasch, Bob Goodman, Lois Dowd, Jim Bronner, Bill Bronner and Jack Friedlander appreciated your cooperation.

Again, thank you very much on behalf of myself and the entire staff of the Evanston Court Club.

Lee Duda
Evanston, IL

Dear Mr. Ardito:

I would like to thank you for re-establishing my faith in a lost art,—courtesy, which you extended in our phone conversation of February 17.

I still find it somewhat hard to believe that I called your office and requested a U.S.R.A. rule book, and you, without any hesitation volunteered not only the rule book, but also the current issue of *National Racquetball* magazine.

Enclosed find my personal check for \$7.00 to cover the cost of a three year subscription to your fine publication.

Once again, thank you for your courtesy and warmth extended in our conversation.

Thomas J. Giuliano
Park Ridge, IL

Dear Mr. Leve:

I just finished Dr. Benjamin Fisher's interesting article on eye safety (*Jan. '76*) on the courts. I read it with my left eye because my right eye is swollen completely shut. I was hit in the face with my partner's racquet and broke my nose this morning. The only reason I mention my accident is because I see similar accidents every day and it's frightening because racquetball injuries tend to be of a fairly severe nature, especially head injuries.

I play every day, sometimes twice a day, and it's been my observation that any sport played at such close contact that uses a club, stick, mallet, racquet, foil or what have you, also should *offer*, if not *require*, some type of headgear that provides total protection to the head, not just the eyes. Baseball, hockey, polo, football, even cycling and fencing are all fast, close contact sports that require some type of headgear.

Why not racquetball? It certainly fits into this category. It seems to me we're still in the *dark ages* if we don't see the need to protect the player's head! Hasn't anybody out there had this notion after they got smacked on the head as I did today? This player would like some serious suggestions if anybody has them . . . my 10 year-old son's football helmet is beginning to look pretty good!

Sylvia McConnell
Northbrook, IL

Dear Chuck:

Thank you for forwarding the complimentary rule books and recent editions of *National Racquetball* Magazine. I passed out both editions at our employees' tournament and they were well received.

I am sure as a result of this contribution, our employees will be more informed about the great sport of racquetball.

Again, thank you.

Eldon VanSpybrook
Milford, MI

Dear Chuck:

Who are you guys trying to impress anyway? I was at the Aurora Pro-Am and what a tourney it was. Stuffed pork chops at the hospitality room one night, ham sandwiches at lunch, gatorade outside the courts, a show-off shirt, \$3 back for reffing a match, more than sufficient lighting to take home movies of the pros from a multitude of angles (they turned out)—ok I'm impressed. See you in Milwaukee. Oh yea, the magazine is currently the best in the business. Here is a check for a year's subscription.

Tom Sweeney
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Dear Chuck:

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to offer our thanks from the South Florida Racquetball Club for the help that you gave us in regards to our recent tournament. Frank Johnson and I both feel that you went above and beyond the call of duty in giving us the assistance that you did.

Our tournament was a huge success, drawing 83 participants in five divisions. Although we did not receive your magazines on time to hand out at the tournament, we did have posters in our hospitality room soliciting membership in the U.S.R.A.; as well as mentioning upcoming N.R.C. pro tournaments and other functions of your organization.

Special thanks should be given to Leach and Seamco for providing us with racquets, score cards, and balls. You might want to make mention in one of your future articles that we played in excess of 100 matches and only had four ball failures.

We also would like to extend another invitation for you to visit South Florida again, due to the fact that we always like to see someone of national prominence that we can beat. Please keep in touch.

Frank Johnson, President
Jim Lane, Vice President
South Florida Racquetball Club

Racquetball Liability Insurance

G. Barry Klein, CPCU is the owner of Checkmate Insurance Center, a commercial insurance agency in Sherman Oaks, California. His home court is The Center Courts in West Los Angeles. Mr. Klein also teaches one of the advanced insurance courses leading to the Chartered Property—Casualty Underwriter designation, and is a holder of that degree.

Ours is an accident-prone sport. We put two—sometimes four—aggressive players in a confined area with metal or hard plastic racquets, high velocity balls, and a determination to win. It is inevitable that we will collide, hit each other with the ball, and occasionally with a racquet.

In most cases these accidents don't produce any measurable injury. We pick ourselves up and play the point over. Maybe, if we just took a hard driven ball in the small of the back or back of the leg, we might even give up the next few points out of reluctance to get in front of our opponent. In fact, we often gamely shrug off painful injuries for which we would otherwise sue if the accident had been in a car instead of on a court. After all, it's part of the game and the "machismo" attached to it. But what happens when the injury is serious enough to run up medical bills, or even cause permanent injury? If you inflicted the injury, are you liable for it? If you are, do you have or can you get insurance protection for it?

As a matter of fact, most of us do carry liability insurance for this although we may not realize it. Playing racquetball is a personal (as contrasted to business) act and coverage is provided under Comprehensive Personal Liability (C.P.L.) policy. The C.P.L. policy is included in virtually all Homeowners and Renters policies which we carry to protect our households. It can also be written by itself for a very nominal charge.

The C.P.L. policy says that "the company will pay on behalf of the insured all sums which the insured become legally obligated to pay as damages because of bodily injury or property damage." We become legally obligated to pay damages when we lose in court, or when our insurance company decides to pay because of the likelihood of losing in court. The actual peril (cause of loss) is negligence. A court will hold against you if you are negligent, or for you if not negligent.

Let's digress for a moment and look at negligence. The elements of negligence are 1) a standard of care owed to another, 2) a breach of that standard of care, 3) actual damages incurred by the other party, and 4) the breach of the standard of care must be the proximate (direct) cause of the damages.

Now picture yourself on the court, in play, with no formal referee. Your opponent serves a ball which bounces back near his head, and you see him there. Instead of stopping, calling "Hinder", and replaying the point, you swing. Your racquet injures his eye, causing him to need stitches and endure pain. In this case, the standard of care owed was the obligation not to swing when you saw the opponent near the ball. You breached the standard and the breach directly caused the injuries. Lastly, there were actual damages incurred.

Other factors might come into play, of course. It can be argued that your opponent may have contributed to the damages by not wearing an eyeguard, a standard safety precaution. Or that he contributed to it by violating rule 4.10 (C) which



requires him to give you a clear shot at the ball. In addition, there are several other legal concepts (last clear chance, comparative negligence, *res ipsa loquitur*) which can further complicate matters.

What about the court owner, often a racquetball club or YMCA? Court owners, too, owe a standard of care. Examples might be the duty to provide a reasonably safe place to play and to warn of hazards. A court owner who supplied a highly waxed court might be held to have breached his standard. However, it is folly to expect the Y's or Club's insurer to pay just because an injury occurred on their court.

It has to be remembered that racquetball is a new sport. Reasonable and prudent standards of care arise from an accumulation of court decisions, and there haven't been many yet. All we can do is strongly recommend that all players try to be careful—and carry a healthy amount of Comprehensive Personal Liability insurance just in case.

Prize Money . . .

All Time Men's N.R.C. Prize Money Earnings

Rank	Player	Prize Money
1.	Charlie Brumfield, San Diego	\$14,375
2.	Steve Serot, San Diego	13,050
3.	Steve Keeley, San Diego	11,325
4.	Steve Strandemo, San Diego	8,235
5.	Marty Hogan, St. Louis	4,790
6.	Bill Schmidtke, Minneapolis	4,656
7.	Richard Wagner, San Diego	4,140
8.	Jerry Hilecher, St. Louis	3,070
9.	Ron Rubenstein, Chicago	2,785
10.	Mike Zeitman, Memphis	2,750
11.	Davey Bledsoe, Memphis	2,675
12.	Ron Strom, Minneapolis	2,080
13.	Craig McCoy, Riverside, Cal.	1,580
14.	Dan Alder, Milwaukee	1,530
15.	Charlie Drake, San Diego	1,195
16.	Bill Thurman, San Francisco	415
17.	Paul Ikier, Minneapolis	410
18.	Ken Wong, St. Louis	400
18.	Jeff Bowman, Chicago	400
20.	Joe Ycaza, Atlanta	330
20.	Dave Charlson, San Diego	330
22.	Bill Dunn, San Francisco	285
23.	Victor Niederhoffer, New York	250
24.	Gordon Kelly, Grand Rapids, Mich.	235
25.	Randy Stafford, Memphis	200

1975-76 Men's N.R.C. Prize Money Earnings

Rank	Player	Prize Money
1.	Charlie Brumfield, San Diego	\$5,675
2.	Marty Hogan, St. Louis	4,275
3.	Richard Wagner, San Diego	2,700
4.	Dave Bledsoe, Memphis	2,425
5. (tie)	Steve Strandemo, San Diego	2,275
	Steve Keeley, San Diego	2,275
7.	Steve Serot, San Diego	2,050
8.	Bill Schmidtke, Minneapolis	1,525
9.	Craig McCoy, Riverside, Cal.	1,100
10.	Jerry Hilecher, St. Louis	1,050
11.	Mike Zeitman, Memphis	650
12.	Ron Rubenstein, Chicago	350
14.	Jeff Bowman, Urbana, Ill.	300
14. (tie)	Ron Strom, Minneapolis	150
	Paul Ikier, Minneapolis	150

All Time Women's N.R.C. Prize Money Earnings

Rank	Player	Prize Money
1.	Kathy Williams, Hazel Park, Mich.	\$1,375
2.	Peggy Steding, Odessa, Tex.	1,350
3.	Sue Carow, Glenview, Ill.	850
4.	Jan Campbell, San Diego	400
5. (tie)	Shannon Wright, Dallas	350
	Jan Pasternak, Houston	350
7.	Janell Marriott, Salt Lake City	250
8.	Jean Sauser, Northbrook, Ill.	150
9.	Jennifer Harding, Portland	125
10.	Betty Johnson, San Diego	100

1975-76 Women's N.R.C. Prize Money Earnings

Rank	Player	Prize Money
1.	Peggy Steding, Odessa, Tex.	\$850
2.	Jan Campbell, San Diego	400
3.	Shannon Wright, Dallas	350
4.	Kathy Williams, Hazel Park, Mich.	300
5. (tie)	Janell Marriott, Salt Lake City	250
	Sue Carow, Glenview, Ill.	250
7.	Jean Sauser, Northbrook, Ill.	150
8.	Jan Pasternak, St. Louis	100

Kendler Awarded Frank Leahy Notre Dame Sports Award



Bob with another sports pioneer—pro football's George Halas Sr., Chicago Bears' owner.



Bill Veeck (l) back in baseball harness as White Sox generalissimo; former Chicago Bear Coach Abe Giron, and USHA president Bob.

Introduction by: Joe Ardito.

Next to Avery Brundage, the man I am going to introduce has probably had more influence in his sport than any other man in history. Currently, he is president of the United States Handball Association, United States Racquetball Association, National Handball Club, and National Racquetball Club. The first two are the governing bodies for the amateurs, the second two govern the professionals. Ironically, there are no similar organizations and no similar presidents. Believe it or not, he has been the ONLY president these organizations ever had . . . and his administration goes back a quarter of a century.

He earned the position he holds in the court sports. Thirty years ago he took handball away from A.A.U. and gave it back to the players. Avery Brundage made the decision that handball should go to whomever was best for it. Succeeding events proved the wisdom of his judgment.

Our honoree promptly invented the glass handball court, standardized the rules, the facilities, the equipment. He organized a Players Fraternity, a Perpetuation Fund, tied

up all the manufacturers who profited from the sport, published two magazines and several books. Before he finished, there were tournaments all over the land in both handball and racquetball . . . for juniors, collegiates, and masters . . . on indoor and outdoor courts . . . for one, three, or four-wall players. In fact, today there is a tournament somewhere in America every week in the year, and clinics throughout the Summer months. Do you wonder why handball is enjoying the greatest growth in its history, and racquetball is exploding like no other sport ever has.

The honors that have come to him are his only reward. At the Centurion Hall of Fame in Los Angeles, the inscription on his bronze bust reads: "For a lifetime of devotion to a sport without personal gain." In Dublin, the Irish Handball Council plaque reads, "The cradle of handball dedicates this club to the Father of Handball."

As one of his doubles partners, it was my pleasure to see him win many handball tournaments . . . five of them national doubles championships. His awards run into the

hundreds from all over America, but the two that have made the most profound impression on him are the Frank Leahy Award and the 33rd Degree in Freemasonry. Although many others are equally significant, he is overjoyed that his work is recognized by various spiritual leaders. It means he has achieved his goal . . . to embrace every race, color, and creed in a true Players Fraternity . . . beholden to one God and the great principle of good sportsmanship.

Handballers consider him a living legend . . . not only because he gives so generously of himself but because he is an inspirational leader who has dedicated his life to the physical and mental well being of all . . . and especially to the rewarding characteristics of good sportsmanship. Ladies and gentlemen, I feel highly honored in presenting the Frank Leahy award for Handball and Racquetball to Mr. Handball himself . . . Bob Kendler!

I wonder how many of you folks know that the first game ever played was handball . . . that it was developed over 1000 years ago, and that virtually every sport subsequently evolved from it. Unfortunately, handball does not offer the cash incentive that physical prowess derives from mass entertainment. For this reason, today's fans owe a great debt to the parent of all play . . . handball. Bouncing a little black ball against a wall incubated everything that has since been done with a ball. So when you see a great baseball, or basketball, or football game . . . you can say "Alleluia" for handball, because it gave birth to the sports industry and still accounts for the good condition of many fine athletes.

Historically, if you have been enriched either physically or financially in competitive sports, you owe it to our Celtic forefathers . . . who early learned that moving a ball (either by hand or foot) could be very fascinating. You owe nothing to our present fathers who eventually learned that it could also be very profitable. The discovery of Handball has certainly had a great impact on the American sports scene. From it, emerged some of our most famous athletes . . . and from it also, emerged the Olympics . . . far-fetched as this may seem to you. When you realize that it all started with handball . . . that Avery Brundage made it his lifetime sport . . . that he identified it throughout the world as "the perfect game" . . . then you must join with me when I say that "in the beginning, it was handball . . . and in the end, it was the Olympics."

What pains me is that handball has never been a part of the Olympics. If it were not the poor man's sport, perhaps the funds would now be available so we could put our show on television and bring it to you. This is the greatest hope for handball . . . an all-glass court where five to ten thousand can attend while five to ten million view at home. This is a present possibility, and if any of you are curious, I invite you to see a model portable all glass court at my office in Skokie.

You know, there is nothing faster than handball. It is a two-handed,

two-fisted, and two-footed sport that requires a strong heart, powerful lungs, good eyes, instant reaction, and competitive intelligence. Oddly enough, it doesn't require the build of a bull. Far more important is the cunning of a cat. Its greatest virtue is the sportsmanship it engenders and, unlike some sports, we hold character above cash.

Handball serves a dual purpose. Because it's the chess of the court sports, it sharpens your mind for business, while it conditions your body for sports. If you are a professional athlete, you know that nothing prepares you for battle better than handball. If you ever want to find out how handball supplements football, ask George Connors. Or Johnny Morris. Or Marshall Goldberg. Or Johnny Lujack. Or George Blanda. Or Jim Bakken. Or Mr. Quarterback, Sid Luckman. Or a guy named Jerry Ford.

Thank goodness I lived to see the day handball became a part of the college curriculum. Students can now include a course in either handball or racquetball at many of our leading schools. The University of Texas, along with the University of Colorado, offer either of the sports as accredited courses. It makes me very happy to know that Handball (of Celtic origin), and Notre Dame (also of Celtic origin), are so closely identified. When they start teaching handball HERE, there are going to be some new national champions!

Needless to say, the big universities have big handball plants. Notre Dame also has some big handball players. One of the really great ones was Father Thomas Brennan . . . a superstar in many sports, and particularly in handball. Known as the "Irish Whip," he devastated his opponents in the 48-foot court with his remarkable left hand kill shot. This beloved professor taught Theology to George Connors and Moose Krause while at the same time teaching them that God frowns on a handball loser. It's no secret that God beamed on Father Brennan with nary a frown!

I don't mean to imply that Moose Krause wasn't an outstanding

handball player. It's just that he relied more on his body than his hands to coerce his opponents. Noel O'Sullivan, his assistant, tells me Ed's unintentional hinders were always intentional, and that he never lost.

Surprising as it may seem, Father Hesburgh did not play handball . . . squash appealed to him. Many times I have appealed to the Lord to forgive him for this "slight" to the Irish National Pastime.

Noel also told me that Ara Parseghian was the best handballer he ever played at Notre Dame. Another devastating lefty, he was a fierce competitor with roll-out kill shots and wicked hops. For eleven years, Ara and Noel played at least twice a week . . . the longest series on record . . . with the issue still in doubt. I like Noel's remark that Ara was a tiger inside the court and a puddy-cat outside . . . but in or out, he was always a perfect gentleman. And if handball can do that for Ara, just think what it can do for you!

Ara's great dignity did not suffocate his infectious sense of humor. In May, 1974, when the Alumni Association named the Miami of Ohio graduate the first honorary Notre Dame Alumnus, Ara considered it a great honor, but confessed he didn't know why it took most people four years and him ten! Students still debate whether or not he could stop the rain. Or whether it is more difficult to spell Parseghian or Presbyterian. The one thing they never debate is the value of the eleven years Ara chose to devote to "Our Lady's tough guys" and their university.

Nothing will ever testify MORE to the glory of handball . . . than that it goes down through the ages bearing on its banners immortals like Parseghian, Krause, Connors, and Brennan . . . who served God in the halls of Notre Dame, served Man on the fields of sport, and served Youth in the courts of handball.

Court Position and Shot Selection

This article discusses court position, and shot selection for beginners and intermediate players. Court position is your position on the court after hitting a shot; shot selection is your choice of shot after your opponent hits the ball. Good court position and shot selection is easier to learn than shot execution; however, players tend to be so emotionally involved in their shot execution (how they hit the ball) that they do not learn the two topics that are fundamental at all levels of play. First, the fundamentals of court position are discussed with examples; then strategy for each level of play is given.

The proper court position depends on the situation, but in most cases, a player should be in an area called center court (see figure 1). Center court is an area on the court, not a point. The position where you should stand within center court is determined by the situation (i.e. whether you just served, attempted a kill, hit a weak shot, hit a ceiling ball, etc.) The biggest mistake made by most players is that they play too close to the front wall. Beginners do not need to play close to the front wall because their opponents hit most of their shots into the back court; seldom are their opponents accurate enough to hit a shot which will bounce twice before reaching the back court area. Advanced players don't need to play close to the front wall because they anticipate well enough that they can cover the front court shots from center court. By placing yourself in center court position, you will be able to cover most of the shots with a minimum effort. Also from this position you are daring your opponent to hit a kill shot; in most cases, the shot will be high; since it is easier to move forward than backward when hitting a ball, you

will be in the right position to move forward toward the ball for a re-kill or pass shot.

The basic principle in all of the following situations is that you play in an area where you can cover most of the shots and move only after your opponent can no longer change his shot selection.

Suppose that you just served to the left rear corner. Figure 2 shows where you should stand if you hit a good serve. The "hitting area" is an area between two lines drawn from the ball position to the two front corners. If your opponent hits toward the front wall, this area is where the possible offensive return may occur. The proper position is then half way back from the short line and to the left so that you are either slightly outside the hitting area or slightly inside the hitting area. The better the serve, the more you should move into the hitting area because 1) the possible return will probably be down the left wall, or 2) you can force your opponent to hit down the wall. However, if you move too far into the hitting area, you are purposely blocking your opponent's shot, and you can be called for an avoidable hinder.

From the position in figure 2, you are cutting off most possible avenues of return; down the wall shots or cross court shots which are not kill shots usually are setups with your opponent behind you.

Suppose you are in back court, and you just hit a weak shot to the center of the court. Most beginners make the mistake of rushing up to the short line to cover the possible kill shot or stay back to cover the pass shot; the first choice allows your opponent to win the point on an easy pass shot; the second choice gives him too easy of a chance to hit a kill shot. It is better to move using two movements (see

figure 3): first run to center court; then as your opponent swings, determine if the shot will be a kill shot or a pass; if it is a kill shot, start running up to cover the kill; if you can't tell where he is going to hit the ball, make a guess and move with the shot. It is better to guess and run than to stand flat footed at center court. By using two movements, you will be able to cover most shots without committing yourself too soon.

Suppose you just attempted a kill shot from back court. The biggest problem I notice is that players stand after hitting a kill shot because they think that the point is over. You should always follow up a kill shot by moving to center court to cover the possible return. By doing this, you will find that when you do hit balls higher than desired, your opponent will rekill your shots less frequently; you will put pressure on your opponent even when you miss a shot. Beginners sometimes cannot hit a good kill shot even on a setup if they know that their opponent is moving back to position.

Suppose you just hit a pretty good ceiling ball down the left wall. Figure 4 shows the proper position after hitting a good ceiling ball. There is no reason to run back up to center court. You should see if your opponent is going to attempt an overhead; if he does, move forward with the shot, not before. If he hits another ceiling, you will already be within a few steps of the right position.

In order to play effectively from center court position, you should watch your opponent out of the corner of your eye as he prepares to return a shot especially from back court. You should not look directly at your opponent unless you are

wearing eye protection. A helpful hint is to turn your body slightly towards the ball; this will allow you to see the ball better and move with the shot easier. Some players like to use their racquet as a guard as they watch their opponent. This enables them to look longer yet still be protected. Figures 5 and 6 show the stance for shots into the back left and right corners respectively. The racquet should be in both hands in the ready position, and you should be leaning forward ready to move. At first, the stance may feel awkward, but try it for a few weeks and you will find that you will be more prepared and therefore hit more offensive shots.

Once you are playing in the right area of the court what shot should you select to hit? The shot selected will depend on many variables: your ability, your opponent's ability, the score, etc. The skills of a beginner and an intermediate player are more easily adapted to a set of rules for shot selection. Shot selection for advanced players will be discussed in a later article because the problem is more complicated for the advanced player than the beginner or intermediate player. Before discussing shot selection, let me define a beginner and an intermediate player. In my mind, a beginner has trouble controlling almost any shot well; an intermediate player can hit all of the shots fairly well if standing alone on a court but does not hit too many kill shots during a game.

Since beginners have trouble just hitting a ball straight, they should use a strategy which will allow them to develop an ability to continue a rally. Most beginners should concentrate on a very simple strategy. One such strategy is to hit a v-ball or cross court on all shots (see figure 7). Try to hit the ball so that it does not hit the side wall; this

will make your opponent work for his points because he will get very few easy setups in the middle of the court. The key to controlling the ball is to get the racquet back to the set position early and let the ball drop to at least waist high. As you become proficient at hitting balls which die in the back corners, start using intermediate strategy. This strategy will help develop your strokes because your mind has to make very few decisions (i.e. hit the ball to the other side of the court). While playing, you should concentrate on court position and getting your racquet back to the set position. Your concentration should not be on the steps involved in the forehand; you should concentrate on shot execution during warmup using a drop and hit drill or practice sessions, not during a game. Shot selection for beginners is simple: hit cross court.

For service returns beginners should start returning serves by concentrating on meeting the ball in front of their body and hitting a pass shot to the back of the court. You will develop your consistency if you try to return the serve with the same shot each time. All that can be expected from a beginner on service returns is consistent returns to back court.

Since intermediate players have the basic skills for hitting most shots on setups, their selection should emphasize their best shots. However, in order to improve, the strategy should incorporate one of the fundamental principles of shot selection: pick a shot which will minimize the points you lose and put the most pressure on your opponent.

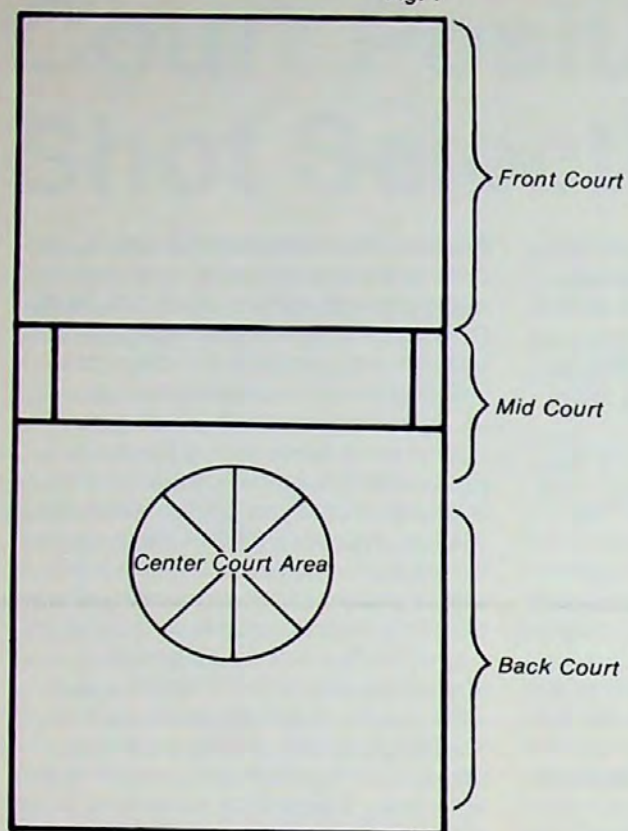
The biggest error made by players of all levels is hitting balls which hit the side wall and come straight

through the center of the court; not only is the shot a setup, but you must give up center court position. On all shots where your opponent is behind you, you should attempt a kill shot down the wall (see figure 8). By hitting down the wall, your opponent's view will be partially obstructed, he must contend with the wall, and if you hit the ball high, the ball will carry to the back corner forcing your opponent away from center court. Discipline yourself to take the shot down the wall; aim for a spot on the front wall which is about five or six feet from the side wall. As you become proficient at keeping the ball off the side wall, move your point of aim closer to the side wall. You will be surprised that after a few times of using this strategy, even though you will hit a lot of balls straight through the center of the court, you will win more games because you have reduced the number of slow shots coming through the center of the court. Balls which come near the center of the court but do not hit the side wall are usually moving too fast for your opponent to hit an effective shot. By hitting down the wall, the worst that could happen is that you get a hinder called against you when you hit the ball straight back at yourself. By using this strategy, your opponent may win a point by hitting a good shot, but you will never lose a point.

When you are in the back court, try to hit a pass shot to your opponent's weak side which is normally his backhand. After hitting the ball, try to move to center court. In hitting the shot, try not to catch the side wall. If you find that you cannot move your opponent out of center, hit a ceiling ball.

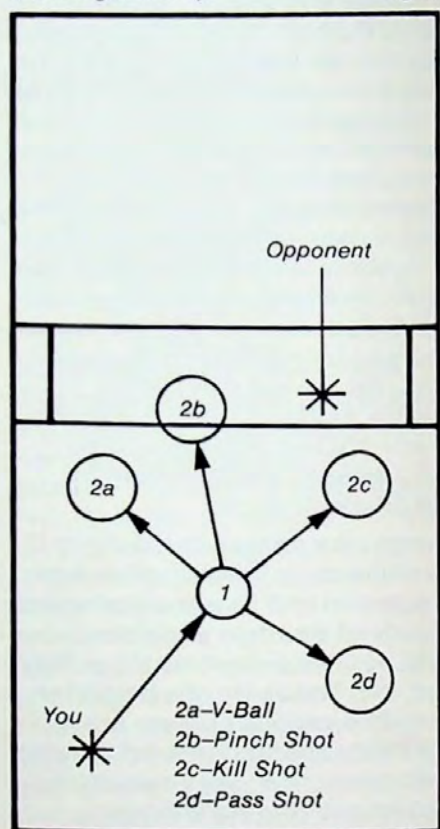
By combining the technique of center court position and intermediate shot selection, you should get more shots at front and

Fig. 1



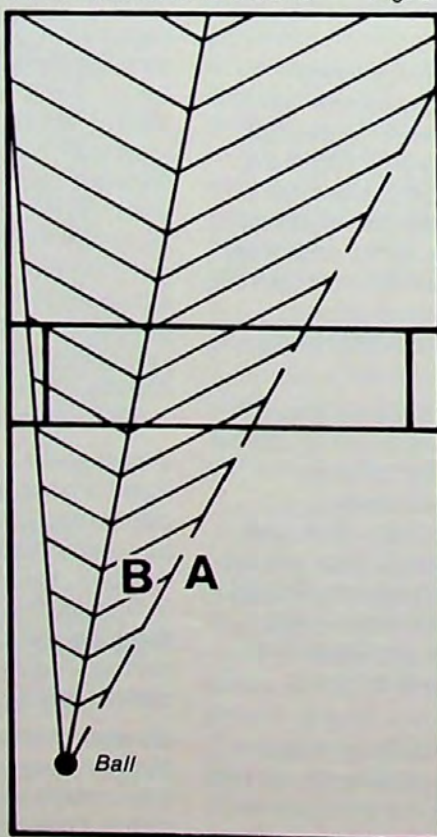
Covering a Set Up

Fig. 3



Court Position After a Serve

Fig. 2



Hitting Area

A-B Alternative Positions



Possible Hitting Area

Court Position After a Ceiling Ball

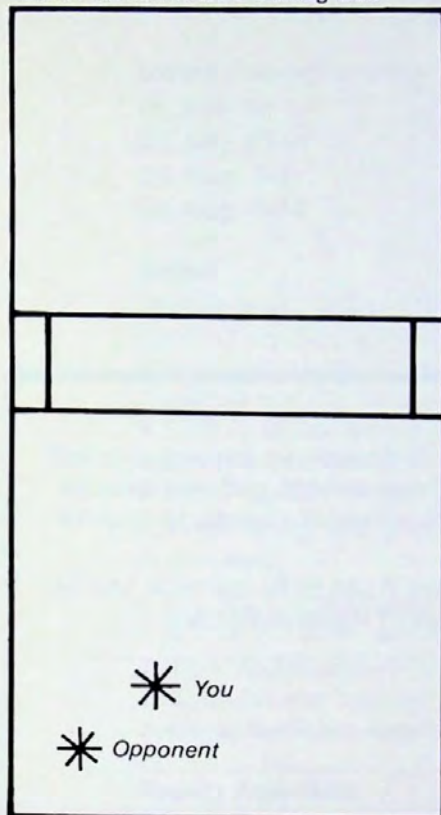


Fig. 4

Watching the Left Rear Corner

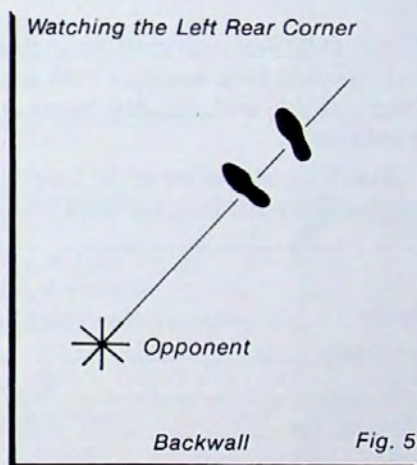


Fig. 5

Watching the Right Rear Corner

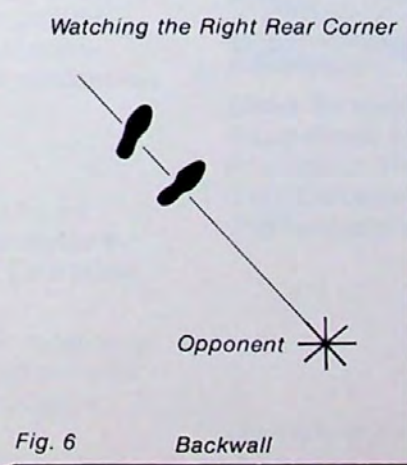
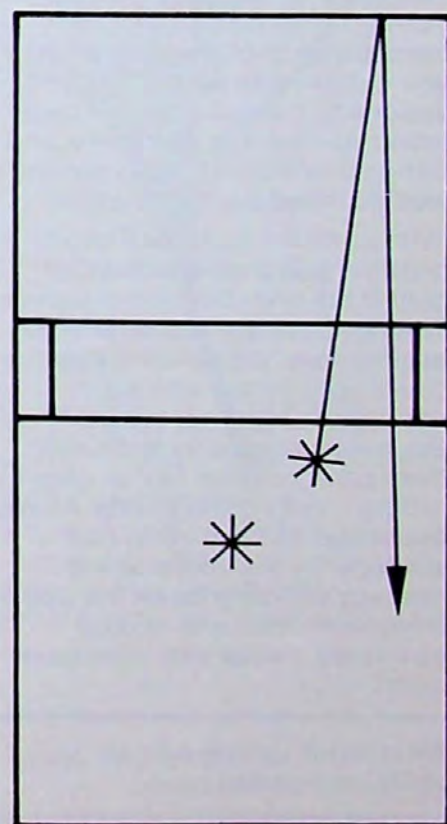
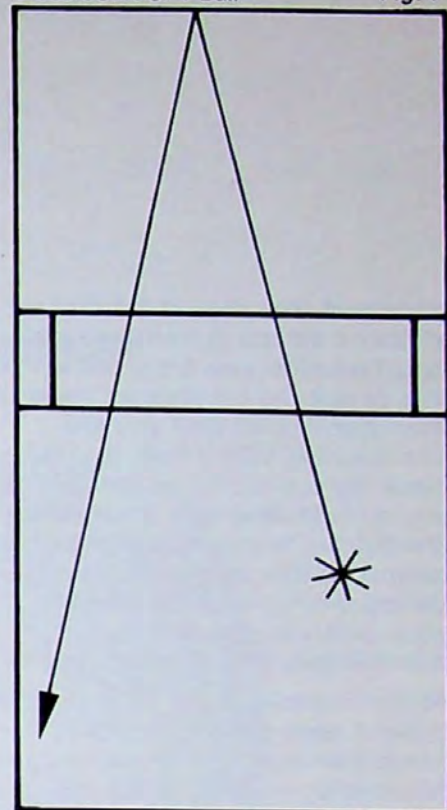


Fig. 6

Cross Court or V-Ball

Fig. 7



Down the Wall

Fig. 8

midcourt. You should attempt kill shots on setups in front and mid-court whether you are proficient at this or not. Do not attempt kill shots from back court until you are proficient at killing from that far back. By practicing on your shots, you should develop proficient kill shots from more areas of the court; as you do this, be more offensive by taking more kill shots, but keep your opponent honest by occasionally hitting cross court.

At the intermediate level, you should learn patience and the fundamentals of an offensive game. As mentioned in the article on service returns, do not try to kill most service returns; return the serve with a ceiling ball. Be patient during rallies and wait for the percentage shot, the shot which you can kill with a high degree of accuracy. This strategy will begin to teach you control, discipline, and patience which is fundamental in a well-rounded advanced game.

In this article I discussed court position and shot selection for beginners and intermediate players. The two basic principles of court position are "play and hold center court" and "move with your opponent's shot, not before." Beginners should try to develop their court position and strokes by hitting mostly cross courts. As you become proficient using this strategy, try the intermediate strategy of hitting down the wall from front court and to your opponent's weak side from back court.

Next issue: ceiling ball, kill shot, drills, and game theory.

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"Train Your Backhand"



Phil Tyne is a professional athletic trainer and is the personal trainer of Steve Strandemo. He has worked with Steve for two years and has trained athletes for competition in a number of sports. He has served as the assistant Strength Coach for the San Diego Chargers, and has trained a gold medalist swimmer for the Olympics, national AAU volleyball players and professional racing cyclists.

Dan Bialk is a free lance journalist with a background in athletics. He has been a sports writer for major daily newspapers, and has been a sports announcer in television.

In training for the backhand swing, try to come as close to the actual movement of the racquet as possible. Leg and shoulder movement into the ball is very much involved in the backhand. Although there is a wrist snap at contact with the ball, power comes from the legs, hips, and shoulders.

The backhand is more natural than the forehand, because the backhand is an uncoiling of the body, not an extending of the arm. Most novices swing their arm at the ball in the backhand rather than just naturally opening up their body. The power in the backhand comes from stepping into the ball and swinging from the whole back, trunk, and torso, thereby uncoiling. It takes some confidence to be able to hit with this stroke because it takes a little bit more time to swing.

The timing is the same, however, in both the forehand and the backhand. The backhand looks slower because the arm doesn't travel through as large a range of motion as it does in the forehand.

The exercises in Figure 1 are good, fundamental exercises. They involve the body, legs, and shoulders. Exercise not to swing the weight, but to coil and uncoil the body with a resistance in the hand.

Fig. 1

Backhand Swing Exercises
—a good warmup exercise—

Use a light amount of weight, anywhere from 10 to 12 pounds for men. Women can drop down to a five pound weight and work up to 12 pounds. Remember this is a conditioning exercise for a racquet that weighs only 9-ounces. Cock the wrist, and take a small stride, just as in the actual backswing. Place very little weight on the rear hand, and lean into the ball with the weight. Keep the wrist stiff all the way through. The actual follow through is a combination of hip motion and the back muscles pulling the racquet through the ball. Start with 15 repetitions and progress up to 30-40 reps. This particular exercise should be done a little slower with concentration on the follow-through.

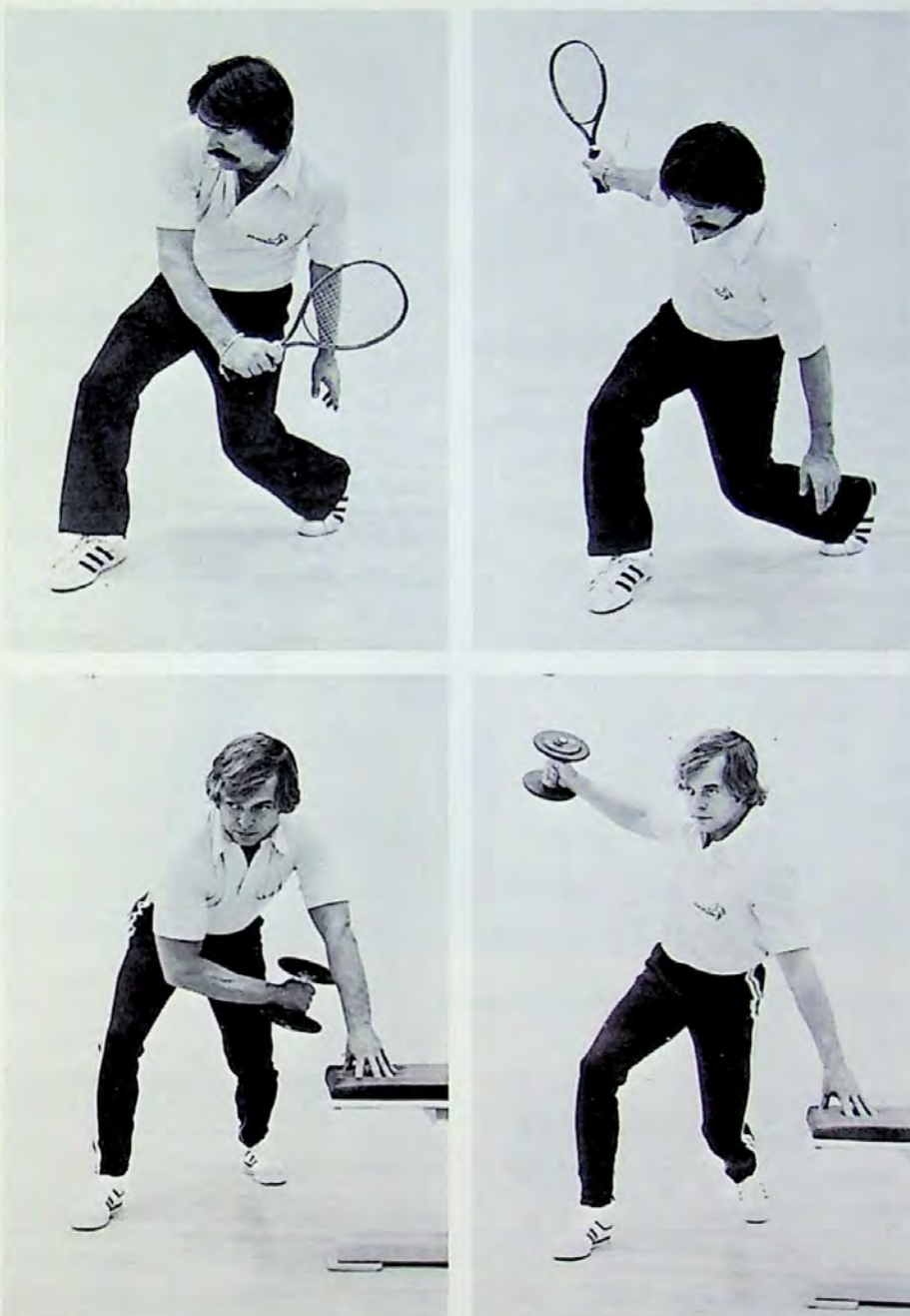


Fig. 2

One Dumbbell Rowing Exercise
—good for muscles—

Use 20-35 pounds, and start with the same amount of reps. Bend the body over so the back muscles are isolated. Perform this exercise ambidextrously, working both sides of the body. Pull the weight up to the hip area, thereby working the back and shoulder muscles. Keep weight on the left knee and left hand. Just pull up the weight and hold it at the hip for only a split second. When the weight is returned to the floor each time, extend it out a little in front of the normal shoulder movement.

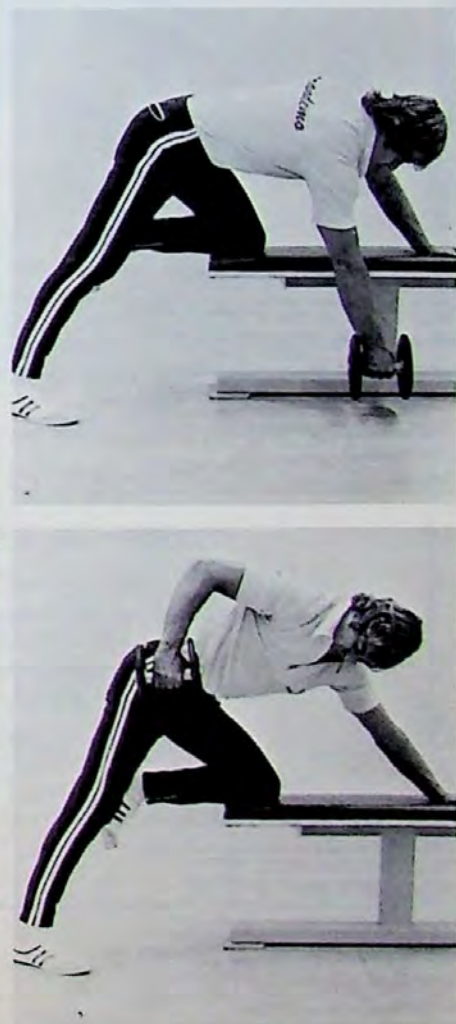


Fig. 3

Side Laterals Exercise

—great for the follow-through—

Bring the weights forward, almost touching them in front of the body. Raise the weights into a position just beyond the normal section of the shoulders so that they're in a higher position than shoulder level, and just barely back of the head. Spread the feet just a bit wider than the shoulders, and flex the knees slightly to keep the strain off the back. Use a light weight of 15 pounds.



Fig. 4

Upright Rowing Exercise
—for the front shoulders—

Raise the elbows up, and then bring the weights up over the top of the elbows so that the elbows end up being lower than the actual weights. Use 20-35 pounds, and 12-20 reps are adequate. Strive for a full extension and work the shoulders as high a range as possible.



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Part II

How To Referee

Controlling the match is the essence of refereeing. Without the control from a neutral party, racquetball matches would result in chaos, as would any competitive sport lacking a judge to enforce the rules. Yet a lame referee can sometimes be more disruptive than no referee at all, a situation that often leads to ugly scenes on the court.

Therefore, for those who take their refereeing seriously, this article will give some insight on the ways and means of maintaining control of the match.

As this series of refereeing develops, we will try and hit almost all possible situations that can occur on the court. However, for those of you who may have specific rule or situations that need clarification or interpretation write *Letters, National Racquetball*, 4101 Dempster St., Skokie, Illinois 60076.

Calling the Score. As touched on briefly last issue, control of the match begins with the method of calling the score. By the timing and tone of his voice, the referee can project virtually any image he wants,—weak or strong, knowledgeable or confused, confident or apprehensive, professional or amateurish.

One of the unusual things about racquetball, due primarily I suspect to the youth of the game, is that in many parts of the country players and referees have different words for the same thing. A good example is "*point*." Now everybody would generally agree that when you're serving and hit a kill shot, you have scored a "*point*." Right? Not in St.

Louis. In St. Louis you have scored a "*tally*," which is most difficult since tally is a verb, not a noun. In San Diego, I once heard a referee call the score as "*one serving love*," although there was no net within miles.

To my mind, the unit of scoring is a point, and the first player to score 21 of them wins the game. I feel very strongly that if refereeing is ever to become standardized, the first thing we need to agree on is what the unit of scoring is. And I agree on point.

The reason for the above discussion is that uniform calls by referees is just another method of not creating problems on the court. I've seen players get upset and/or confused when confronted with the point vs. tally situation and there's no need for it. The less the player has to worry about the referee, the better.

The calling of the score is the starting point for each rally. The "*eight serving six*" begins the 10 second count for both server and receiver, and never should a serve be allowed that was not preceded entirely by the score.

Often players who tend to "*get hot*" like to grab the ball and put it in play as soon as possible. It is the referee, not the "*hot*" player who controls the pace of the match. The receiver as well as the server is entitled to the 10 seconds between rallies if he so desires.

When do you call the score? Generally when the server has picked up the ball and as he steps into the server's zone. You may call

it earlier, if you feel the server is taking too much time, i.e., stalling between plays. As the play ends, it should end on a referee's call: skip ball, point, hinder, etc. The worst call is no call at all.

The sequence goes something like this: "*Eight serving six*." The 10 seconds has started, the server bounces the ball, checks the receiver, who is ready, and the ball is served. During the play a shot hits the floor. "*Skip ball (pause), side out.*" (pause). "*Six serving eight.*" And the process is repeated.

The last thing you want is to have that rally-ending shot occur and the referee not say a word. Everybody and his uncle is waiting for your call,—players, fans, and linesmen. Every split second seems like an eternity. Up or down? Good or bad?

Loud and clear. This all brings us to another refereeing rule for referees: right or wrong, call it loud and clear. Nobody is correct every single time. Just as the top players miss easy shots occasionally, the best referees will miss plays sometimes. Players do not expect perfection from the referee, but they do expect decisiveness. A hemming and hawing referee is the worst kind, the kind who will be eaten alive by a tournament veteran who relishes intimidation. If you make a bad call,—forget it. If you're lucky enough to have linesmen, the call will be reversed. Otherwise, just keep on plugging.

The one thing I never do, and never recommend doing is ask the players their opinion. They are playing, you are refereeing. If you

had on the jock, you'd be playing. You are not a fan, not a spectator,—you are an integral part of the match.

How ridiculous would it look if the judge at Wimbledon came up with, *"I'm not sure, Mr. Connors. Was it in?"* Imagine the ruckus if the opponent was Nastase? The whole scene would be ridiculous and amateurish and detrimental to the sport. The same holds true for racquetball. Yet how many times have you seen the weak referee, unable to make a call, ask for player advice? Terrible.

This should not be misinterpreted as meaning that players should never be allowed to voice an opinion. If in fact, two honest players are competing and the referee misses a call, one player might offer, *"No, the ball skipped."* Or, *"No, I got it on two."* In these cases, simply thank the player for his honesty, call the score and proceed.

This is termed, *"calling your own"* something of which there is not enough around the courts these days. In fact, I am sure there are many of you reading these pages right now who are wondering what it would feel like to utter those words, *"no, I got it on two,"* just for the experience.

In any event, as a referee I welcome the player who calls his own. It shows sportsmanship, class and desire to win fairly,—the essence of sport.

When to talk with the players.

Seldom, if ever. The less discussion that goes on between players and

referee, the better off you'll all be. As stated earlier,—you ref, they play and it's that way for a reason. If however, a situation pertaining to rules occurs some discussion might be necessary.

Player A felt that the ball struck a court hinder. You briefly and calmly explain that as in your pre-game instructions, there are no court hinders and you are very sorry.

Player B wants to know how many time outs he has remaining. *"You have two remaining,"* is your reply. No more, no less.

The only real exception to this rule, is if you get stuck with a true rule interpretation. And the only way you can get stuck is if you're unprepared. Example: In the middle of the rally, Player A as he strikes the ball, loses a shoe. Player B returns the ball and Player A scrambles around trying to retrieve it. When he can't, he argues that he was entitled to an automatic hinder. You felt that he would not have reached the shot anyway, shoe or no shoe, and that your call against him would stand. Player A, certain he is correct, requests a ruling by the tournament chairman. This type of discussion could occur, although rare. By the way,—the player was right,—it is an automatic hinder (Rule 4.9(H)).

Technical fouls. The newest aid to rule enforcement is the Technical Foul. Prior to its inception the referee had two choices, allow abuse from players, or forfeit the match. Now the technical foul allows some leeway to both player and ref, with the technical foul resulting in deduction of one point from a player's score.

What is a technical foul? Similar to basketball's technical it is a situation of deliberate and excessive conduct and/or language directed toward the referee, linesmen, spectator or player. Examples of technical foul material are obscenities, which are instant technicals if there is any doubt in my mind that it was uttered a) in the direction of the referee or b) to a fan or opponent or c) to the player himself if loud enough for the spectators to overhear. I have called two technical fouls this season, and both were for obscenities. In neither case was there any malice involved, in both cases the player was in the midst of a frustrating loss and momentarily lost control of his emotions.

Other examples of technical foul-like activities would be excessive striking of the ball after the play has ended, especially after a warning; yelling, screaming or hollering at an opponent, spectator or referee beyond decent limits; leaving the court without permission; failure to return to the court after a time out; general unsportsmanlike conduct.

Something good to know: if a player should strike the ball in anger (or for whatever reason) after the play is over, and that ball should turn up broken, the player has forfeited all rights to a replayed rally by his striking the ball after the play had ended.

Forfeiting a match. I have only forfeited one match in my life, other than for injury or failure to be

present for the start of a match. In that case it was prior to the technical foul rule and simply involved a player becoming upset with a call(s) on my part, saying, "I can't play under these conditions," and walking off the court, to the locker room. I simply announced, "this match is over," and I went home.

I would hate to see a situation occur that was bad enough to warrant the forfeiture of a match today. I have heard of such occurrences and the description of these matches is sickening. Any physical violence whatsoever, in any way, shape or form, would compel me to forfeit the match, as referee. Such drastic action is not only warranted, in such cases it is mandatory for the good of the sport.

Sure, tempers flare occasionally, players sometimes get hit by balls, and even racquets, in the course of play. Emotions often run high. But a player who cannot control his emotions without endangering the physical health of another player, does not deserve to play racquetball.

There are other situations, such as a player who, despite two or more technical fouls, continues his outbursts of obscenities or other unsportsmanlike conduct.

The forfeiture rule is there to protect the sport from those persons who do not care enough about it, to be willing to play in the spirit of competition and sportsmanship. We do not need these people. When their on-the-court conduct becomes so

detrimental to racquetball that we are compelled to take action,—they are only receiving their just due.

Intimidation. Only the meek and unprepared can be intimidated. A referee who does not know the rules or how to enforce them will find himself on the defensive almost from the first point. Players will test referees, see how far they can go with shenanigans, verbalizations and so forth.

It does not take a great deal of time to read the rule book and become familiar with racquetball's rules. It only takes some desire and guts to referee during a tournament, and it only takes some self-pride to take pride in one's refereeing ability.

The best way to stop a player from intimidating you is to not let him start. Crisp, concise calls; affirmative, authoritative voice; and control of the match are all you need. Your call of "play ball," or "10 seconds to serve," should be enough to get the game back on the track. If a technical is in order,—dish it out.

And above all,—never, never change your mind. Never allow yourself to be talked into reversing a judgment call. Never re-play a rally because one player feels you missed the call. Make your call, loud and clear, and stick to it.

Next issue: hinders and avoidable hinders.



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Amid praise, criticism and much curiosity the front glass wall has finally arrived. WALL STREET, a new 11-court facility in Sacramento, California's Capital City, has installed only the second front glass wall for a handball/racquetball court in the United States. For years, handball and racquetball promoters have encouraged the use of glass walls to "open-up" the indoor court games for gallery and television viewing. Side panels, rear walls and small front portholes have opened the door for the totally new experience of front wall glass.

The front glass wall is one of several features this spacious, new court club has included that express innovation. A health food and juice bar, full line pro shop and a private conference room capable of handling ten persons are provided along with two saunas, two whirlpool baths, a steam room, exercise room (with Isokinetic equipment), viewing mezzanine and child care space.

The obvious advantages of glass for gallery viewing and television coverage do bring some problems for players. The most common complaint before playing on the court has been, "People in the viewing lounge will be a distraction to my game." However, after spending a few minutes on the

glass wall court these sentiments seem to change.

"People watching are not the distraction I expected," says the general contractor, who has become an avid player, *"but there are some difficulties in seeing the ball if I let my concentration slip."*

Lighting seems to be the major factor in visibility. When it is out of balance, the black balls are easily lost, and even the colored balls are difficult to see. As the proper lighting adjustments are made it becomes clear that the glass front wall is a great playing surface and truly incredible for the gallery.

A local coffee service president and racquetball enthusiast says, *"Playing on the glass is a completely different experience. I'm really enthusiastic about playing on it. It seems a little more active than other courts, and because it's all glass I can concentrate more easily than on the partial glass walls."*

One of the lady members speaks for many new players when she says, *"Basically, I'm a chicken. I'll wait to play on a glass court when my game improves."*

Ladies are not second class members at this place. From the large, comfortable locker area to a graded ladder for female players,

WALL STREET has encouraged women of all ages to become a part of the burgeoning court sports.

"First Class" are probably the two words that best describe the club. Its people, atmosphere, courts and style of operation suggest quality. Steve Harris, Club Manager, speaks with excitement about the game and WALL STREET. *"Almost everyone who walks through our doors likes what they find and return to join the club. The enthusiasm of club members is highly encouraging as well. We've had some members who have brought in eight to 10 friends in one week just to show them our place and to try out the game."*

WALL STREET's excellent location is a big asset. It is 15 minutes from the Capitol Building via Freeway 50 (the same freeway that leads to the Casinos at South Shore Lake Tahoe). Mather Air Force Base is five minutes away, California State University is five minutes in the opposite direction. There's plenty of parking, and as neighbors WALL STREET has an ice skating rink, a



roller rink, five theatres, office and industrial space and a Carrow's Restaurant.

"Glass walls don't come easily," says Greg Flessing, Managing Partner for this project. "Once we made the commitment to the glass front wall it seemed that everyone became a skeptic. A thousand times I faced the question, 'Are you sure that it is going to work?' ... Some thought it would shatter. Others thought it would be too distracting for play. I thought it would never get here!"

The glass wall is made of four 5' x 20' panels of 7/8" annealed plate glass. Each section weighs over 1200 pounds. After a painstakingly slow process of ordering and shipping, the huge panels were delivered to the semi-completed site. Several portions of the facility were left unfinished until the glass was brought in and set in place. Sacramento Metal and Glass, the glazing contractors, used large mechanical cups to lift the panels into position. There are no mullions between the panels to obstruct viewing.

"We lived through a period of negative comments during the first days the court was used," Flessing adds. "But having completed several adjustments in lighting and backdrop, I believe that glass was the right choice. The potential viewing in the glass court is incredible, and I think players will

really enjoy play as it becomes more familiar."

The club holds its first tournament in late April (for members only), but has bids in for USHA and NRC tour stops in the Fall. Several open and invitational tournaments will be scheduled during the year for which local and regional television coverage is being discussed.

Another rarity, WALL STREET is one of the few clubs that has been built inside an existing structure. The pro's and con's have been debated by developers for years. The end result of this facility would lend strong support to those who favor a remodeling effort.

Beichley, Flessing and McAlister, a Northern California partnership, are the designers of WALL STREET. Their club philosophy stresses the value of positive staff attitudes and comfortable club atmosphere, viewing these to be as important as quality courts and spacious facilities. Since completing this project, the partners have been active with consulting services for potential court club owners and developers.

"Racquetball is today's supersport," says Harris. "Having played tennis for years, and watching so many struggle to pick up that game, I'm confident that the indoor court sports will capture attention as people see how easy it is to get started. A large part of our membership are 'first-timers' who got hooked after just one hour on the court. That is something tennis will never be able to do."

Still dripping perspiration from a match just completed, Jack Briar, a leading handball player in Northern California volunteered, "... these courts are super. Everything is so solid that you get great play from every surface. That's the kind of place where good handball matches become great ones."

Like the indoor sports themselves, the glass front wall is here to stay. Some problems, yes. But with the increase in gallery involvement and corresponding player earnings, front glass will prove itself a winner.

The Court Club, Canada's largest privately developed racquetball and handball facility officially opened in Edmonton February 24. Tom Wilkinson, quarterback of the Grey Cup Champions, and an ardent racquetball player, officially cut the ribbon to open the club.

The Court Club has eight courts, all with glass backwalls. Each of the men's and women's locker rooms have a whirlpool and steam room, showers and are fully carpeted.

A spacious lounge for relaxing after playing overlooks three of the courts.

The Court Club was built by Goldridge Investments Ltd., a company organized and owned in Edmonton by four Edmontonians: Clare Drake, John Kempo, Howie Rankin and Ken Wilson. The total cost of the facility is in excess of \$500,000.

First mortgage financing was provided by The Alberta Opportunity Company.

The Court Club has already signed up more than 300 members. The Club can accommodate 600 members. The annual membership dues are \$325.00 per person, with a family membership costing \$400.00. There are no transfer fees, share purchase costs or additional locker rental fees. A membership entitles a member to unlimited playing privileges and allows a person to book courts up to one week in advance.

Courts can also be rented by non-members.



Construction is complete at The Racquetball Club, a new eight court racquetball/handball club located at 1939 South 108th Street (Hwy 100) in West Allis, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee. The \$600,000 club is now open for play.

Developers of the club are six Milwaukee area businessmen: Harry Jordan, Jim Griffin, Ted Torcivia, Keith Nygren, Len Lovdahl, and Russell Erhardt. Manager of the new club is Frank Millonzi who has had wide experience coaching and teaching at university and secondary school levels in the area. He holds a Masters Degree in Physical Education from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. Sandy Coffman has been named women's co-ordinator. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has served as director and instructor for racquetball and fitness programs at the Wauwatosa, WI YMCA for several years.

A special Charter Member offer for the first 200 members was completely sold out in just six weeks. Total membership is nearly 400 at this point although full scale membership drive efforts have not yet begun. Club President Jordan anticipates that planned total club enrollment of 900-1,000 members may be nearly sold out by spring.

The Racquetball Club will include a central fireplace lounge offering good spectator viewing of all eight courts. The building will be completely air-conditioned and humidity controlled for year-round comfort. There will be a supervised playroom-nursery, complete pro shop and deluxe locker areas for men and women with large Scandanavian style saunas and individual showers.

At a snowy ceremonial ground breaking last December found the following people at The Racquetball Club (l. to r.): Keith Nygren, Jim Griffin, Ted Torcivia (club officers), West Allis Alderman Fred Cashmore, Club President Harry Hordan, West Allis Mayor Urban Gauser, Alderman James Sangstock, Rod Lanser and Sandy Coffman (racquetball club staff).



Sixth National Court Clubs Association

Seminar-Meeting June 25-27, 1976

at: Chicago Marriott (near O'Hare Field), 8535 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631. Phone: #312 693-4444.

- Full slate of speakers on agenda. Saturday—9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday—9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Covering all aspects of the Court Club feasibility.
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The International Racquetball Club, a 10-court Southern California facility that has been rated among the finest in the country, opened in April and already has been taxed to capacity.

"The response has been tremendous," said co-owners Jack Blankinship and Bob Hendricks. *"Even before we opened, we were receiving 30 calls a day from prospective members. The enthusiasm for racquetball in the area is terrific."*

Located in Artesia in South Los Angeles County, the International Racquetball Club covers nearly 16,000 square feet and was built at a cost of \$650,000.

"We wanted to build a facility that was unequalled for the playability of its courts, the available comfort for its players and the overall beauty—both inside and outside—of the building," Blankinship said.

The courts have individual air conditioning, two are glass constructed and all playing walls are a full eight inches thick. Court construction was so precise that there is less than one-eighth of an inch variance in the corners.

"We have been told that our facility has the best-dimension courts constructed," Blankinship said.

The tilt-up walls were finished with a specially treated paint that prevents chipping or peeling.

For the comfort of the players, the locker room areas—each 1500 square feet—contain saunas and Jacuzzis with specially built and

high powered water outlets. The beauty of the locker rooms is further enhanced by a five-colored Venetian terrazzo that covers all wet areas as well as the walls above the Jacuzzis.

The building's interior is open and free with a two-story skylight complete with planter enhancing this feeling. A supervised nursery has proven extremely popular with women players.

The construction of drywalls feature the use of double thick plywood and with the thick plush carpeting throughout easily control

noise level in all areas of the building. Paging telephones and a modern public address system serve as an efficient and non-irritating communications system.

Manny Toraya serves as the club's general manager and resident professional and he operates a fully stocked pro shop.

The owners praised the help of Charles Drake and George Brown of San Diego who advised on construction and operation of the facility.



Cove Courts, an ultra-modern racquetball club, opened for play last month. Located at the corner of 22nd Street and Finley Road in the western Chicago suburb of Lombard, the club is in the hub of DuPage County, one of the nation's top ranked counties in growth, income and educational level.

Frank Kapple, president of Cove Courts, stated, *"We feel being the first club in the middle of DuPage, coupled with our residential location will appeal to the growing corporate community as well as offering the family unit a unique recreational outlet. Our philosophy has been proven with over 75 per cent of our pre-opening memberships of the family variety."*

Art Hughes, one of the Chicago area's leading racquetball/handball teaching professionals will head up the club's activities, which will include league play and inter-intra tournament competition.

The facility itself will have eight air-conditioned courts, some with glass viewing areas of the lounge, men and women's carpeted locker rooms, separate saunas, exercise and weight rooms, an attended children's nursery, pro shop and beautiful lounge area.

An extra feature-service, planned and supervised exercise programs, should serve the real health addict. The programs will include slimnastics, yoga and self-defense. The initial reaction to these programs has been very favorable.

All in all, Cove Courts seems to be well on their way to becoming an integral part of DuPage County's and racquetball's answer to a complete recreational and social life.

The Court House Sports Clubs, Inc., the largest midwest chain of racquetball/handball court clubs, has opened number six, an eight court facility in the northern Chicago suburb of Skokie.

After two months of operation, the Court House midas touch has once again descended upon one of their clubs, as talk is now circulating about an eight court addition or even an entirely new club nearby.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Terry Fancher, Skokie Court House's teaching pro. *"We don't have enough court hours to satisfy the people."*

The Skokie Court House is very similar to the other Court House suburban clubs which dot the Chicago area,—Northbrook, Arlington Heights (site of the U.S.R.A. Central Regional), and

Schaumburg. Men and women's locker rooms, saunas, exercise area, pro shop, nursery, snack area and lounge, make the Court House a compact and efficient place to play.

"We feel that one of the reasons for our success has been our lessons program," said John Wineman, one of the Court House owners. *"Our professional staff is a group of dedicated, personable, experienced racquetball instructors, who really make the program worthwhile."*

Court House lessons come in private, semi-private and group sessions, with a series of special lesson offers from time to time.

Will The Court House group continue to expand?

"You never know," smiled Wineman. *"We've always got our eyes and ears open."*



Skokie Court House

It's Racquet Time in Oklahoma City. On February 3rd, Racquet Time courts commenced operations with a 10 court racquetball facility at 6701 W. Wilshire, Oklahoma City.

The club presently offers a beautiful observation lounge, men's and women's locker areas with steam sauna and an extensive pro shop. A children's nursery is under construction.

Hugh McCrabb, a native of the city, has left the coaching staff of Oklahoma State University to become manager of the new operation. According to Hugh, *"The enthusiasm for racquetball is just beginning in Oklahoma City, but, like everywhere, it is growing at an unbelievable rate."*

Other Racquet Time courts are presently under construction in Lexington, Kentucky, Kansas City, and in Woodland Hills (Los Angeles).

Full construction began February 11, 1976, on the \$1.5 million Almaden Valley Athletic Club located at 5400 Camden Avenue (1 block North of Kooser Road) in San Jose, California. Formal groundbreaking ceremonies took place Saturday, February 28, 1976, at 2 PM.

Funding for the only one-stop recreation facility in the Bay Area is being provided by Mercury Savings and Loan, 19376 Stevens Creek Boulevard, Cupertino, California. The General Contractor is Chrisman-Taylor of Palo Alto. The architect is Roaten Hinson of Los Gatos. Tennis court plans were drawn by Robert Folendorf of Los Gatos and construction has been awarded to Pacific Surfacing of Campbell. The project was developed by Court and Aquatic Sports, Ltd., a California corporation of whom the principals are Alan Bickel, MD; Stephen Jackson, MD; Joseph Shank; James Theiring and Phillip Warner, MD. Shank and Theiring will be the General Managers of the club.

Designed in the style of a Mediterranean villa, the facility will include the following amenities; twelve championship tennis courts; six indoor handball-racquetball courts; five platform tennis courts; two fully equipped health clubs operated separately for men and women; complete swim school with junior Olympic-size pool (incorporating the former Los Gatos Swim School); spa facilities including for men hydrotherapy pool, steam, sauna, and cold drench and for women, hydrotherapy pool and sauna with luxurious locker room facilities for both; fully equipped pro shop; refreshment counter; lounge with fireplace and color television; multi-purpose room for community meetings; fully staffed nursery; playground equipment and junior locker facilities.

Completion date of the facility is June 1, 1976. Charter memberships are now available. For further information one may stop at the membership sales trailer at the construction site or telephone 408-267-3700.

Seminar Report Available

Booklet report covering agenda speakers at the most recent National Court Clubs Association seminar-meeting (Dec. 12-14) in Chicago now available. \$10 covers cost of report plus individual membership in NCCA through 1976. A "must" material for anyone interested in the A-Zs of Court Club business potential. NCCA, 4101 Dempster st., Skokie, IL 60076.

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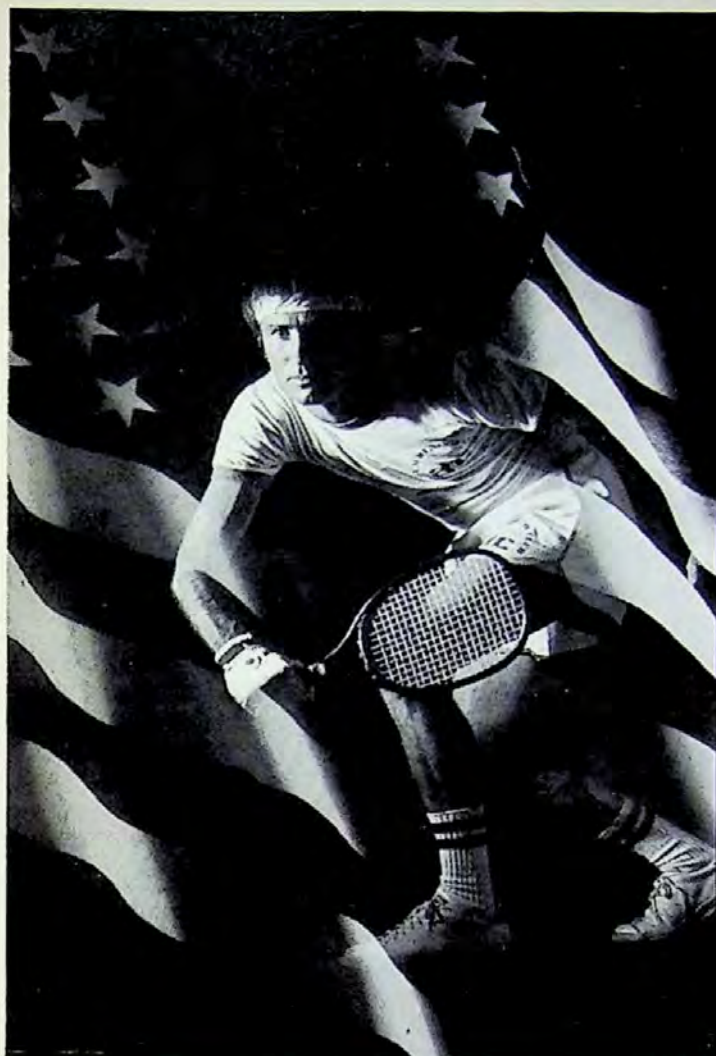
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The new Almaden Valley Athletic Club groundbreakers are (l. to r.): Dr. Stephen Jackson, Robert Chrisman, Joseph Shank, James Theiring, City Councilman Jim Self, Dr. Phil Warner, Tony Rowe, Robert Taylor, general contractor Ron Peabody, Dr. Alan Bickel, Robert Folendorf, landscape architect.



Bicentennial NATIONAL RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

- LOCATION:** ATLAS HEALTH CLUB, San Diego, California
- DATE:** June 13-18, 1976
- SANCTION:** By the National Racquetball Club (N.R.C.) and the U.S. Racquetball Assn. (U.S.R.A.)
- OFFICIAL BALL:** Seamco 558 (black) in all amateur events; Seamco 559 (green) in all professional events.
- RULES:** U.S.R.A.-N.R.C. rules and regulations apply. If two events entered, players may have back to back matches.
- TROPHIES:** To first four places in amateur events.
- ENTRY FEE:** \$25 per person for first event. If player enters second event, that event is \$15. Men or women's pro singles — \$50.00
- ENTRY DEADLINE:** In our possession by 6 p.m. May 30, 1976. Prescribed fee must accompany entry form. Entries received after the deadline or unsigned, or without fee will not be accepted.
- PRIZE MONEY:** \$12,000 Men's Pro Singles;
\$ 3,000 Women's Pro Singles.

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM AND/OR ATLAS HOTEL ROOM RESERVATION

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NAME OF DOUBLES PARTNER	AGE	CLUB

Please enter me in:

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|---|---|--|
| ☐ Amateur Open Singles | ☐ Women's Amateur Singles | ☐ Golden Master Doubles (55 & over) |
| ☐ Pro Men's Singles | ☐ Open Doubles | ☐ Women's Doubles |
| ☐ Senior Singles (35 & over) | ☐ Men's Senior Doubles (35 & over) | ☐ Women's Pro Singles |
| ☐ Master Singles (45 & over) | ☐ Men's Master Doubles (45 & over) | |

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WAIVER: I hereby, for myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators, waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages I may have against the Atlas Health Club, the U.S. Racquetball Assn. or National Racquetball Club, their respective agents, or any facility used for this tournament, for any and all injuries which may be suffered by me in connection with my competition in said tournament.

Signature _____ Ph. _____ Partner's Signature _____ Ph. _____

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June 13-19 are the magic dates, the week where the top players and fans from all parts of the nation journey to racquetball's Mecca,—on the sunny shores of the Pacific.

The beautiful Atlas Health Club, rich in amenities like whirlpools, saunas, lavish exercise areas, outdoor swimming pool, jogging track and so many others will more than ably be our host.

"Everybody here is really excited," said Jerry Sandstrom, vice president of the Atlas Hotel chain. *"We're anticipating just a superb tournament."*

The 1.7 million dollar club is adjacent to the Mission Valley Inn, in the heart of Hotel Circle, making easy access from virtually every hotel and motel on the Circle, especially Mission Valley and Town and Country, directly across the street.

Two glass-backwalled courts will make the viewing comfortable for hundreds of spectators at the Atlas, and the five additional courts with conventional balconies give the club seven with which to work.

The competitive highlight of the Nationals will be the \$15,000 N.R.C. professional championships, with \$12,000 in the men's bracket and \$3,000 in the women's. The prize money has been donated by Seamco Sporting Goods and Leach Industries as the grand finale to the N.R.C. endorsed Seamco-Leach pro tour.

"This will be the tournament of all time," said Charlie Drake, manager

of Leach's racquetball division. *"I've never seen so many players working so hard for one tournament. Whoever wins here will truly be the best player in the world."*

An added delight to the Nationals will be the closed circuit television system piped directly into your hotel room (Mission Valley Inn). So players will be able to get some rest between matches and just turn on the tube to get a progress report as to the schedule.

As well as the men's professional championships, national titles will be decided in women's professional play, and a multitude of amateur divisions, including singles and doubles for Seniors, Masters, women and Golden Masters doubles.

"We're expecting 1,000 players and spectators to be attending," said Sandstrom, *"and we can handle them all."*

The National Championships will use the N.R.C./U.S.R.A.'s new tie-breaker rule, making all third games 11 points. The experiment has proved successful at recent pro tour stops as well as many amateur tournaments across the nation.

Although the tournament is just about a sell out, a few choice seats are still available from the N.R.C. All seats are on a reserved basis for the entire tournament and all seats are \$100. To reserve seats (while they last), contact Joe Ardito at the N.R.C. office, 4101 Dempster St., Skokie, IL 60076.

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TOURNAMENT RESULTS



Milwaukee 5

Pro-Am Tour

All photos by Barbara Halpern

Marty Hogan, the St. Louis youngster celebrated his 18th birthday by surviving the toughest field this season and besting a struggling Charlie Brumfield for the championship of the Milwaukee Pro-Am February 26-29.

The win was the second of the season for Hogan on the N.R.C. tour, and upped his one-on-one series with Brumfield to two victories against one loss on the Seamco-Leach sponsored pro series.

The tourney marked the first use of the N.R.C.'s new 11-point third game tie-breaker, which met with overwhelming success. Six matches in the pro division were decided by tie-breaker, including two quarter-finals and one semi-final.

But Milwaukee's main drama was Hogan's devastating win over Brumfield in the finals. Brum, winner here two straight years, was a weak opponent, indeed, when the hard hitter Hogan cranked up his vaunted drive serves.

Unable to get that first serve in play early in the first game, Hogan trailed 14-6 and Milwaukee fans relaxed with the comforting

knowledge that Brumfield was tuning up his game in the Beer City, as is his annual ritual.

But once Hogan relaxed and steadied his serve Brumfield was beat. Exploding drives to both the forehand and backhand forced weak returns or aces and Hogan's serve and shoot strategy was a formula one success. That 14-6 Brumfield lead promptly vanished as Hogan caught him at 16 and kept right on going for a 21-17 initial game win.

Stunned, Brumfield never got into the second game. Down 6-2 and 11-6, his frustration zenithed with a combination avoidable hinder and technical foul on one rally, which cost him the serve, a point, and any semblance of concentration. Hogan ran out with ease for a 21-9 victory.

"When you play as bad as I did, you deserve to lose," said Brumfield.

"I started getting my serves in," said Hogan, *"and there wasn't anything he could do."*

The one thing both Hogan and Brumfield did have in common was that both players barely made it to the finals. The tournament's most exciting match was Brumfield's semi-final win over rapidly-improving Richard Wagner 13-21, 21-1, 11-9.

It was Wagner's third consecutive tie-breaker, having bested Mike Zeitman in the quarters 21-16, 12-21, 11-7 and Ron Strom in the round

of 16, 14-21, 21-14, 11-4. It was Brumfield's first trip to tie-breaker and he got off to so slow a start that it appeared for a while he wouldn't recover.

"The pressure in tie-breaker is incredible," said Wagner. *"Every point is like going for the 21st."*

Rich didn't have any trouble reaching 21 in the first game as he easily stopped his friend and roommate 21-13. But Brumfield roared back in the second game, taking an 8-0, then 14-0 lead, whereupon Wagner let him have the second 21-1.

In the tie-breaker neither player could score the first four times in, with Brumfield finally cracking the ice with a single point in the fifth frame. But Wagner came right back with three points, increased his lead to 5-2 and then stretched it to 8-3. Brumfield, who had predicted a Milwaukee win, called time-out, re-assessed the situation and stormed back for an 11-9 win.

"I just went back to basics," he said. *"When you're down 8-3 in tie-breaker you can't afford mistakes."*

Hogan, who utterly destroyed Dave Bledsoe in his bottom bracket semi-final 10 and nine, was lucky to be

Marty Hogan accepts congrats from Seamco Regional Sales Manager Art Orloski (r.) after his stunning triumph over Brumfield.

there. In the quarters he split with Steve Serot 21-18 then 16-21 to go to the tie-breaker.

With Serot showing flashes of the shooting of which he is so capable, and retrieving to his fullest, Hogan found himself on the short end of an 8-4 tie-breaker situation. Unfortunately for Serot, disaster then struck.

In one of his characteristic all out dives for a mid-court retrieve, Serot collided with the left wall and crumpled to the hardwood in obvious pain,—an all too familiar pose. After a 15 minute injury time out, Steve attempted to play, and Marty easily rolled up four points to tie. Serot could barely reach the front wall with his stroke and referee Chuck Leve stopped the match, awarding the victory to Hogan by injury default.

"There was no way he could continue," said Leve. "I was afraid he might do further damage if he did. One quarter final match is not worth a career."

So Hogan advanced to the semi-finals where he mesmerized Bledsoe in a match where Davey never got going.

"Fifty per cent of his points were directly the result of his serves," said Bledsoe. "I've never seen anything like it. I just couldn't do anything."

The surprising thing about this victory is the fact that Bledsoe is

one of the quickest, if not *the* quickest player on the tour. For Dave not to be able to pick up Hogan's serves, Brumfield must have known he was in for a long finals.

In other quarter-final action, Wagner's exciting win over Zeitman was a real crowd pleaser, as Rich barely stopped Mike's quest for his first trip to the semi-finals. Zeitman had reached the quarters with a surprising and convincing win over Steve Strandemo 21-13, 21-10 in the round of 16.

And it was no easy task for Wagner as the two men split games one and two and then fought it out in the tie-breaker, with Rich coming out on top 11-7.

Bledsoe topped Steve Keeley in his quarter 21-17, 21-16. Neither player did much, but Keeley did less as Bledsoe took home the big win to reach the semi-finals. Keeley did have an impressive 16's victory of Bill Schmidtke 21-16, 21-16 running seven straight points in the second game for the win.

But Bledsoe's superior speed and power was enough of an edge to counterbalance Keeley's finesse and control.

Up top, Brumfield entertained Ron Rubenstein, to whom he had lost in an exhibition a few weeks earlier in Chicago. But the exhibition

Brumfield and the tournament Brumfield are not the same player as Ruby well knew and found out.

Game one was no contest as Rubenstein, who had defeated Craig McCoy in something of an upset in the previous round, could get nothing going against Brum. It ended 21-7 in the first.

Ruby gave it a good effort in the second, causing Brumfield to work a lot harder than he wanted, and then finally to work as hard as he could before taking a 21-17 win to the showers.

The real surprise in the tournament came in the women's pro-am bracket where Northbrook, Illinois' Jean Sausser topped tour veterans Kathy Williams and Jan Pasternak en route to her second place finish. That second was to National Champ Peggy Steding who gave the Milwaukee fans a look-see of what the best in the world is like.

Twenty-five points in four rounds, all her opponents could muster including the 21-5, 21-6 championship round win over Sausser.

In the semi-finals Steding trounced Sue Carow 21-2, 21-3, including an 18-0 first game lead.

Sausser, meanwhile was giving Pasternak fits and finally took the

Racquetball is not a contact sport, but you'd never be able to convince Hogan (r.) and Brumfield of that after the two collided in the finals of the Milwaukee Pro-Am.



match when Jan ran out of gas in the tie-breaker 21-18, 12-21, 11-4. Prior to that Jean topped Kathy Williams, fresh off an Aurora win, 21-8, 21-20.

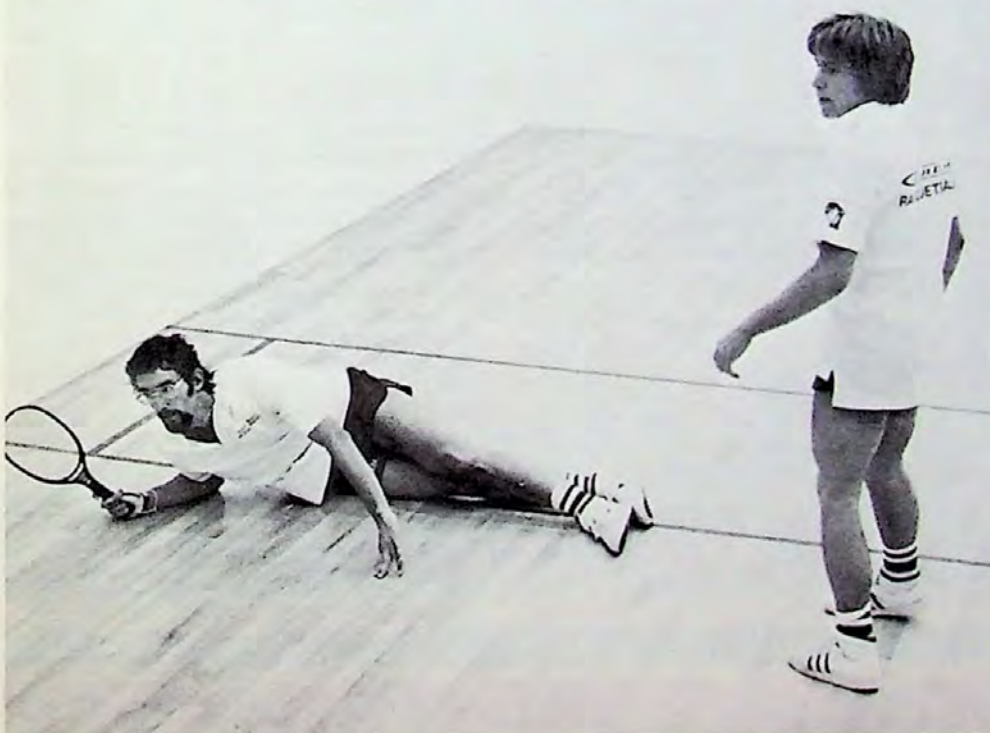
"I don't know what happened to me," said an elated Sauser. "I know that by playing more pro tournaments the competition will continue to help my game. But I didn't think the improvement would come this fast."

In the other quarters Steding outsted Ev Dillin 21-3, 21-1; Carow stopped Barb Tenneson four and 17; and Pasternak eeked out a 21-6, 19-21, 11-3 win over Camille McCarthy.

In the Men's Amateur Open 102 entrants played well into many nights before St. Louis' Rudi Losche was finally crowned winner. Rudi stopped fellow-St. Louisan and National Juniors champ Ben Koltun in the finals 21-15, 21-14.

Koltun upset top seed Ken Wong 21-11, 21-20 in the top bracket semi-final, while Losche eliminated Bill Gottlieb, winner of the Aurora amateurs 21-11, 21-15 in the bottom bracket.

Gordon Kelly, who almost knocked off Rubenstein in the pros (11-7 in the tie-breaker), could do no better than nine and six against Koltun in one quarter; Wong eliminated Brian Parrott 12 and 12 in another; it was Losche over Roger Dolato 21-5, 21-



It was a rough tournament for Brumfield, all the way around. Here he again finds himself on the floor, against Richard Wagner in the semi's.



N.R.C. National Commissioner Joe Ardito presents the check to the winning ladies. It's Peggy Steding (2nd from r.), Jean Sausser (2nd from l.), as Dan Alder, tournament chairman, looks on.

11 in the third quarter; and Gottlieb four and 17 over Chicago's Jim Clemons in the fourth.

A strong field of 32 made up the Seniors bracket and St. Louis' Joe Gibbs, assistant coach of the football Cardinals shattered Paul Franks, Northbrook, Illinois 21-7, 21-2 in the finals. Gibbs' toughest match actually came in the semi-finals against top seed Fred Blaess, Schaumburg, Illinois 21-13, 17-21, 11-8. Franks had ousted Joe Bechard, Waukesha, Wisconsin 13-21, 21-14, 11-7 in his semi-finals.

NOTES OF THE TOURNAMENT...

Consolation winners were Jim Hall in the Amateur Open and Sue Bechard in the rather confusing women's consolation... Other good pro matches included Jeff Bowman's strange (21-1, 18-21, 11-4) win over Gottlieb; Paul Ikier giving Brumfield a good run in one game 14 and five; Jerry Hilecher almost pulling out the second game against Hogan nine and 17; and Zeitman's 21-19, 21-14 win over host tourney director Dan Alder... Host Wisconsin Athletic Club now under new management, showing new exercise equipment and entire new staff, which made some of the tourney organization a bit shaky, but nothing the N.R.C. staff couldn't handle... hospitality was super with Sandy Coffman and able aides providing a smile and good food every time in... Yogurt became the hit of the tournament as players went through 30 cases.

Pro Results, Men (First round): Dan Bertolucci, Hinsdale def. Jesse Valera, New York 21-4, 21-20; Gil Schmitt, Northbrook def. Ed Reinhart, Chicago 21-5, 21-7; Gordon Kelly, Grand Rapids def. Tom McHugh, Milwaukee 21-3, 21-5; Tom Carpenter, Detroit def. Mark Buckley, Orland Park, IL 21-1, 21-7; Tom Gonser, Eau Claire def. Bruce Thompson, Oconomowoc 21-9, 21-10; Mike Weum, Minneapolis def. Jerry Johnson, Sawyer AFB, MI 21-13, 21-0; Rob Abrams, Cincinnati def. John Gardner, Milwaukee 21-18, 21-20; Fred Lewerenz, Detroit def. Pat Buckley, Orland Park, IL 21-2, 21-15; Roger Dolato, La Crosse def. Cliff Dawson, Port Huron, MI 21-11, 21-5.

(Second Round): Charlie Brumfield, San Diego def. Bertolucci 21-3, 21-3; Paul Ikier, Minneapolis def. Rudi Losche, St. Louis 21-8, 21-17; Craig McCoy, Riverside, CA def. Schmitt 21-15, 21-9; Ron Rubenstein, Chicago def. Kelly 20-21, 21-14, 11-7; Steve Strandemo, San Diego def. Carpenter 21-2, 21-1; Mike Zeitman, Memphis def. Dan Alder, Milwaukee 21-19, 21-14; Ron Strom, Minneapolis def. Ben Koltun, St. Louis 21-11, 21-20; Richard Wagner, San Diego def. Gonser 21-9, 21-15; Steve Serot, San Diego def. Weum 21-8, 21-11; Jeff Bowman, Urbana def. Bill Gottlieb, Lansing, 21-1, 18-21, 11-4; Jerry Hilecher, St. Louis def. John Lynch, Urbana 21-5, 21-9; Marty Hogan, St. Louis def. Abrams 21-9, 21-9; Bill Schmidtke, Minneapolis def. Lewerenz 21-11, 21-15; Steve Keeley, San Diego def. Dave Glander, Denver 21-5, 21-5; Ken Wong, St. Louis def. Mark Hiudt, Cincinnati 21-7, 21-5; Dave Bledsoe, Memphis def. Dolato 21-13, 21-6.

(Third Round): Brumfield def. Ikier 21-14, 21-5; Rubenstein def. McCoy 21-11, 21-16; Zeitman def. Strandemo 21-13, 21-10; Wagner def. Strom 14-21, 21-14, 11-4; Serot def. Bowman 21-10, 21-12; Hogan def. Hilecher 21-9, 21-17; Keeley def. Schmidtke 21-16, 21-16; Bledsoe def. Wong 21-14, 21-4.

(Quarter-finals): Brumfield def. Rubenstein 21-7, 21-17; Wagner def. Zeitman 21-16, 12-21, 11-7; Hogan def. Serot 21-18, 16-21, 8-8 (injury default); Bledsoe def. Keeley 21-17, 21-16.

(Semi-finals): Brumfield def. Wagner 13-21, 21-1, 11-9; Hogan def. Bledsoe 21-10, 21-9.

(Championship): Hogan def. Brumfield 21-17, 21-9.

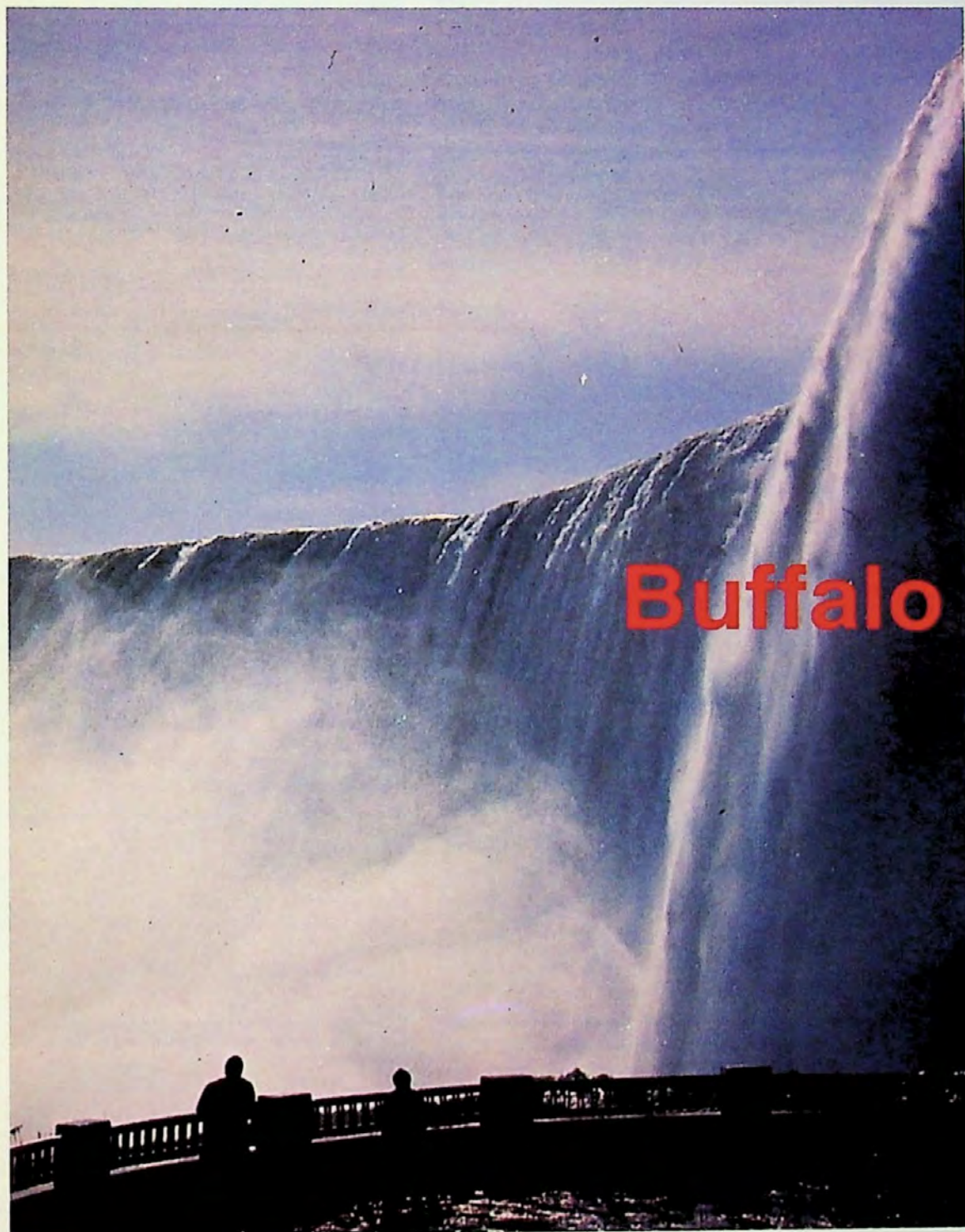
Pro Results, Women (First Round): Donna Valerie, East Lansing def. Julia Marshall, Carmel, IN 21-13, 21-13; Ev Dillin, Elk River, MN def. Sue Bechard, Milwaukee 21-6, 21-7; Bev Franks, Northbrook, IL def. Connie Simons, Lima, OH 21-5, 21-1; Susan Halsey, Troy, MI def. Sarah Houle, Chicago 16-21, 21-18, 11-8; Barb Halperin, St. Louis def. Peggy Gordon, Racine 21-5, 21-9; Cameron Dick, River Forest, IL def. Terry Gnewuch, Oregon, WI (forfeit); Judy Huhta, Mt. Clemens, MI def. Donna Young 21-7, 21-4; Judy Thompson, Davenport, IA def. Lynn Zafis, Milwaukee 21-7, 21-11; Patty Pattyn, Mt. Clemens, MI def. Teri Heneley, Elk Grove, IL 13-21, 21-20, 11-4.

(Second Round): Peggy Steding, Odessa, TX def. Valerie 21-4, 21-1; Dillin def. Franks 19-21, 21-12, 11-8; Barb Tennesson, Elk River, MN def. Halsey 21-5, 21-4; Sue Carow, Glenview, IL def. Halperin 21-2, 21-0; Jan Pasternak, St. Louis def. Dick (forfeit); Camille McCarthy, Indianapolis def. Huhta 21-6, 21-8; Jean Sausser, Northbrook, IL def. Thompson 21-15, 21-11; Kathy Williams, Hazel Park, MI def. Pattyn 21-3, 21-2.

(Quarter-finals): Steding def. Dillin 21-3, 21-1; Carow def. Tennesson 21-4, 21-17; Pasternak def. McCarthy 21-6, 19-21, 11-3; Sausser def. Williams 21-8, 21-20.

(Semi-finals): Steding def. Carow 21-2, 21-3; Sausser def. Pasternak 21-18, 12-21, 11-4.

(Championship): Steding def. Sausser 21-5, 21-6.



6
Pro-Am Tour

Players at the Buffalo Pro-Am were treated to a guided tour of beautiful Niagara Falls and surrounding landmarks. Anyone for racquetball?



First-time winner Wagner is all concentration as he prepares to take a shot off the back wall against Schmidtke in the championship match.

All tournament photos by Ray Thompson

Pro Results Men (First Round): Vic Alvarez, Brooklyn def. Robert Baucher, Winslow, ME 21-20, 21-14; Paul Lazure, Hinesburg, VT., def. Jim Dollinger, Niagara Falls 21-7, 21-16; Ray Capitanelli, West Milford, NJ def. Richard Moore, Waterville, ME 11-21, 21-15, 11-1; Bud Stange, Buffalo def. John Sergeantanis, West Paterson, NJ 21-14, 21-6; Steve Dubord, Waterville, ME def. Tom Brownlee, Brighton, MI 21-11, 21-16; John Alfieri, Acton, MA def. Leo Bernat, Niagara Falls 21-11, 21-7.

(Second Round): Marty Hogan, St. Louis def. Alvarez 21-3, 21-5; Mike Luciw, New Britain, CT def. Charles Drake, San Diego 21-11, 16-21, 11-3; Craig McCoy, Riverside, CA def. Fred Lewerenz, Detroit 21-12, 21-20; Steve Keeley, San Diego def. Jim Winterton, Rochester, NY 21-6, 21-7; Jeff Bowman, Urbana, IL def. Lazure 21-12, 21-9; Steve Strandemo, San Diego def. Ivan Velan, Montreal 21-5, 21-15; Gordon Kelly, Grand Rapids, MI def. Joe Aguglia, Rochester, NY 21-13, 21-9; Richard Wagner, San Diego def. Capitanelli 21-8, 21-10; David Bledsoe, Memphis def. Stange 21-5, 21-12; Dave Charlson, San Diego def. Dubord 21-3, 21-9; Bill Schmidtke, Minneapolis def. John Lynch, Urbana, IL 19-21, 21-4, 11-8; John Spencer, Montreal def. Ron Rubenstein, Chicago (forfeit); Mike Zeitman, Memphis def. John Kruger, Burlington, VT 21-5, 21-6; Jerry Hilecher, St. Louis def. Chuck Wurzer, Buffalo 21-7, 21-4; Mike Romano, Fitchburg, MA def. Leo Marsocci, Rochester, NY 21-19, 21-15; Charles Brumfield, San Diego def. Alfieri 21-10, 21-3.

(Third Round): Hogan def. Luciw 21-11, 21-19; Strandemo def. McCoy 21-5, 19-21, 11-5; Keeley def. Bowman 21-18, 21-6; Wagner def. Kelly 21-17, 21-16; Bledsoe def. Charlson 21-14, 21-5; Schmidtke def. Spencer 21-12, 21-6; Hilecher def. Zeitman 21-10, 21-7; Brumfield def. Romano 21-6, 21-2.

(Quarter-finals): Hogan def. Strandemo 21-14, 21-13; Wagner def. Keeley 21-9, 21-13; Schmidtke def. Bledsoe 16-21, 21-20, 11-10; Hilecher def. Brumfield 12-21, 21-9, 11-9.

(Semi-finals): Wagner def. Hogan 21-8, 18-21, 11-10; Schmidtke def. Hilecher 21-14, 21-20.

(Championship): Wagner def. Schmidtke 20-21, 21-15, 11-6.

Pro Results Women (First Round): Betty Dimmick, Kenmore, NY def. Camille Casero, Niagara Falls 17-21, 21-16, 11-3; Francine Davis, Brooklyn def. Barbara Cornwall, Williamsville, NY 21-11, 21-0.

(Quarter-finals): Peggy Steding, Odessa, TX def. Linda Armstrong, Watervliet, NY 21-1, 21-1; Sue Williams, Buffalo def. Dimmick 21-12, 21-19; Davis def. Irene Ackerman, Southfield, MI 21-13, 21-16; Sue Carow, Glenview, IL def. Colleen Crowley 21-2, 21-3.

(Semi-finals): Steding def. Williams 21-1, 21-1; Carow def. Davis 21-0, 21-4.

(Championship): Steding def. Carow 21-16, 21-18.

Schmidtke, in his first trip to the finals on the Seamco-Leach tour this year, surrounds a forehand.



The Hogan-Wagner semi-final was as exciting a match as you'll find. Here Hogan sets up to kill with his booming forehand, as Wagner prepares to cover.

"When I finally reached the semi-finals at the Aurora Pro-Am," said Richard Wagner, "I told myself never to look over my shoulder again."

That tournament was in January. Wagner followed with a February semi-final finish in Milwaukee and then finally reached the pinnacle of racquetball achievement,— capturing the championship of the Buffalo Pro-Am March 25-28.

Thus Richard Wagner can add his name to the impressive list of only six players ever to win pro racquetball titles: Brumfield, Keeley, Serot, Strandemo and Hogan having preceded him.

The win, as the entire tournament, was exciting, well-played and in front of standing room only galleries at Four Wall Courts in Buffalo. Wagner's championship match win was over the second "story" of the tournament,—Bill Schmidtke.

The 34-year-old Minneapolis veteran was the pressure player of the tourney, winning three 21-20 games and two 11 point tie-breakers before his finals loss to the 20-year-old San Diego student.

Ironically, the Wagner-Schmidtke final was the first time the two had ever played, despite three years of pro racquetball.

"The new N.R.C. method of draw almost guarantees you'll play everybody during the course of the season," said Schmidtke. "So I knew it was a matter of time before Rich and I met. We had a good match."

In a way it was a difficult match for both players, with many hinders and four avoidable hinders. Since both are among the most honest and gentlemanly players on the tour, the cause was due to never having played before.

"They both had some difficulty anticipating each other's movement," said referee Chuck Leve, the N.R.C.'s National Director. "None of the avoidable hinders

were flagrant or intentional, they were just unfamiliar with each other's style. For that reason it was a very tough match to call."

Schmidtke, the two time National Champ who has yet to enter the winners circle in pro play, was the slight gallery favorite, rising to the occasion amid calls of "go get 'im, gramps" from the gallery. His 21-20 first game win brought the fans to their feet, and some felt would take the starch out of the younger Wagner.

"Schmidtke has always been known as a pressure player," said Wagner, "and I knew I'd have to get off to a good start and play well in the second game. I felt I should have won the first, but anytime you lose 21-20 you feel that way."

Rich did jump to a quick 5-1 lead in game two, but Schmidtke tied it at 5-all before Wagner jumped ahead again 9-6. At 12-9 a key avoidable hinder call against Schmidtke gave Wagner 13 and an ace two plays later extended the momentum to 15-9 and then 17-10.

It wasn't over yet, however, as Schmidtke roared back, shooting his backhand well and playing tough along the left ceiling. An avoidable in his favor chalked up point 13 and the stream-lined pro reached 15-17 before Wagner ran out.

"I'm 12 pounds lighter than any time this season," said Schmidtke "and I was confident I could catch him late in the game. But he was shooting well and earned the win."

So they went to the tie-breaker, the first of its kind in the championship match on the tour. Wagner's initial 3-1 lead vanished quickly as a flurry of Schmidtke kills and passes took a 6-4 lead and forced a Wagner time-out.

"The pressure of tie-breaker caused me to play too defensively," said

Wagner. "I'd been winning all tournament long by being aggressive, so I made up my mind to go for it."

That he did. Without committing an error in the 11-point tie-breaker, Wagner put together the streak every racquetball dreams of. Four kills and two passes later, he was the champ.

If Wagner and Schmidtke, who had never been there before, reached the finals, what happened to the other big boys, mentioned previously?

Serot did not lose a match because he was home in San Diego, nursing a shoulder injury. All the higher seeds lost once,—just enough.

Top seed Marty Hogan came closest to reaching the finals, losing the most exciting match of the tournament to Wagner in the semi-finals 21-8, 18-21, 11-10. It was truly one of the great finishes of the tour this year.

"There's not much to say when you lose 11-10 in the tie-breaker," remarked Hogan. "I had my chances to win."

Second seed Charlie Brumfield was a quarter-final loser to St. Louis' Jerry Hilecher. After dropping game one 21-12, Hilecher put together one of his best games ever to top Brum 21-9 in the second, scoring points in between shouts of "I want tie-breaker!"

He got it and in a real nail-biter grabbed the win from Brumfield 11-9 in the tie-breaker to move on to the semi's.

"It must be the atmosphere in the east," said Brumfield, taking his loss well. "Every time we go east with the tour, I lose in the quarters."

If the excitement from that match didn't bring a rise out of the fans, the Schmidtke-Dave Bledsoe quarter had to. Bledsoe, the tournament's third seed, had four straight semi-final or better finishes going into Buffalo, and both he and Schmidtke smelled finals.

Bledsoe took the first game 21-16, busting out from a 15-all tie to win going away, and as usual, many people were already counting Schmidtke out.

He almost was out, too, as game two went to the limit, before Bill eeked out the closest of wins, 21-20 to force the tie-breaker.

"The pressure in the tie-breaker is unbelievable," said Bledsoe. "You feel that you can't afford a single mistake."

Neither man made many mistakes and they seemed to score points at turtle-speed. Never did more than two points separate the combatants and again Bledsoe was unable to put away victory, with Schmidtke capturing the match 11-10.

The following evening, when Schmidtke won another tight one to best Hilecher in the semi's (21-14, 21-20), the tournament seemed to have his name on it.

"He's playing better than he has all season," said Hilecher of Schmidtke. "He just got stronger in the second game."

Despite the upsets, the two biggest surprises were not close matches,—Hogan's overwhelming defeat of Strandemo and Wagner's demolition of Keeley, both quarter-final matches.

"Something's wrong with Keeley's head," said Brumfield. "He's not playing well, but even so, he shouldn't lose by those scores."

Those scores were 21-9, 21-13, one of Keeley's worst defeats of his career.

Hogan, meanwhile, was making life miserable for Strandemo. Riding his booming serve to aces and weak returns, Marty boasted a 14-1 first game lead and almost as impressive second game advantage to 21-14, 21-13 wins, with neither game being as close as the scores indicated. It was another case of what can you do when Hogan's serve is hot?

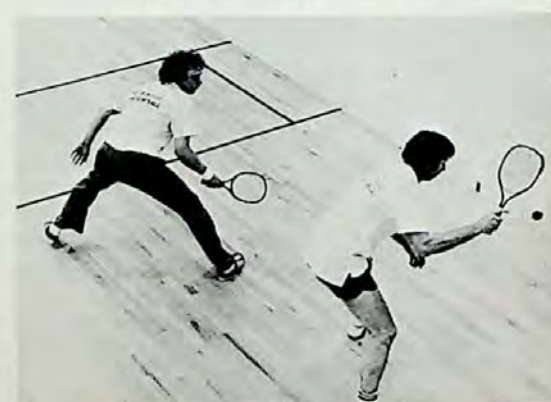
"You scurry around and try to go to the ceiling," said Strandemo. "I just couldn't control the play enough to set the rhythm."

In the women's bracket, only two quality pros showed, top seed Peggy Steding, who had the crowds

Jerry Hilecher, upset winner over Brumfield in the quarters, gets set to powder one of the many offensive shots he had during the match. Brumfield awaits a hopefully poor shot to the left.



As was the case far too often for the national champ, Brumfield found himself doing the retrieving against Hilecher.



Another nail-biter in Buffalo was the Bledsoe-Schmidtke quarter-final. Here Schmidtke takes another forehand as Bledsoe is in the best possible retrieving position.

Women's champ Peggy Steding seems to be counting her lucky stars as she accepts her check from N.R.C. National Commissioner Joe Ardito (l.). At right is Seamco Regional Sales Manager Marv Konowitz, presenting runner-up award to Sue Carow.



blinking in amazement, and number two Sue Carow, who continues to make liars out of those who say she can't compete with the top gals.

Neither lady was tested until the finals, where Steding won, but not without a real test 21-16, 21-18.

"I thought I was going to take her, especially in the second," said Carow. "She wasn't playing as well as she can, and I felt I was shooting well. I'm gonna get her one of these days."

The remaining two divisions of play, Amateur men's open and Seniors were both won by Buffalo's Charlie Garfinkel, who by-passed the pro event.

Gar topped Fitchburg, Mass.'s Mike Romano in the Ams 10 and 13, and downed Four Wall Courts manager Chuck Wurzer in the Seniors 21-8, 21-9.

Gar's toughest test came in the semi-finals where he atoned for a recent loss by besting Montreal's Ivan Velan, president of the Canadian Racquetball Association 21-13, 21-20. Romano also had a tough semi, ousting Mike Luciw, New Britain, Connecticut 21-17, 18-21, 11-1.



Mike Romano, who had his hands full in the finals, here prepares to shoot against eventual winner Charlie Garfinkel. The Gar also captured the Seniors crown.

NOTES OF THE TOURNAMENT . . .

Never were a group of players treated so royally as at Four Wall Courts. Wurzer, Phil Vance, John Doyle, Dick Battaglia and all the staff personnel were just super. Hospitality was unlimited and tasty, the people were friendly and helpful and the pros responded likewise.

. . . The players were treated to a guided tour of Niagara Falls one day, and lovely fruit baskets awaited the top eight at their hotel rooms.

. . . The Western New York Racquetball Association provided an excellent base of referees as well as general tournament co-ordination. Paul Brodnicki, Bill McLaughlin, Bud Stange and Ray Thompson deserved the lion's share of credit here. . . The above four and Chuck Leve had an informative and helpful meeting during the tournament to work out affiliation plans between U.S.R.A. and the Western New York Association. . . Our thanks to the lovely gals and wives who aided registration and hospitality, especially Kris Ziegler who rejected more offers than Andy Messerschmidt. . . Four Wall Courts owners huddled with N.R.C. officials to go over plans for expansion and next year's tournament. . . Garfinkel's decision to by-pass the pro event was the most controversial topic of the tournament, with many local players disappointed that Gar didn't give it a shot. *"Let's face it,"* said Gar, *"where am I going in the pros?"* . . . Soon to be heard from department: 21-year-old John Lynch, playing at the University of Illinois, brought Schmidtke to edge of defeat before succumbing 19-21, 21-4, 11-8. . . Biggest disappointment department: Ron Rubenstein's 11th hour no-show, which disrupted the bottom bracket.

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Montana

Western Montana College

Open A Results, (Quarter-finals): Gary Nygard, Missoula def. Tom Hoff, Bozeman 21-14, 21-14; Jim Farrell, Helena, def. Jeanette Crinch, Missoula 21-7, 21-9; Terry Spear, Missoula def. Steve Dahlstrom, Missoula 21-7, 21-3; Joe Chaves, Butte def. Matt Dalton, Glasgow 21-2, 21-5.

(Semi-finals): Nygard def. Farrell 21-13, 13-21, 21-14; Spear def. Chavez 21-18, 21-15.

(Third place): Farrell Def. Chavez 14-21, 21-10, 21-17. **(Consolation):** Dave St. Pierre def. Dahlstrom 21-18, 21-17.

(Championship): Nygard def. Spear 21-15, 11-21, 21-12.

Open B-C Results, (Quarter-finals) Dan Green, Pocatello, ID def. Melinda Douglas, Butte 21-2, 21-4; Pete Waylett, Dillon Def. Steve Fisher, Butte 21-3, 21-5; Dave Guth, Missoula def. Ron Shipley, Pocatello, ID 21-10, 21-13; Terry Vanderpan, Willow Creek def. Mark McQuirk, Helena 21-7, 21-14.

(Semi-finals): Green def. Waylett 21-3, 21-2; Vanderpan def. Guth 21-8, 21-7.

(Third place): Guth def. Waylett 21-16, 21-13.

(Consolation): Tony Ciapusci, Dillon def. Eldon Miller, Butte 21-8, 21-5.

(Championship): Green def. Vanderpan 21-12, 21-17.

division were upset early in the tournament, as George Long defeated #2 seed Willie Wang of Delaware 15-21, 21-8, and 21-19, in what was probably the most exciting match of the tournament. Additionally, unseeded Buzz Parker defeated #3 seed Clay McCaskey from Richmond, Va., 21-17, 21-7.

The seniors division was won by Charles Sullivan from Maryland who defeated Bill Buckman, Richmond, Va. 20-21, 21-15 and 21-12 in a two hour marathon match. Third place was captured by Alan Baynard from Quantico, Va., who defeated Bruno Giordano, Washington D.C. 21-3, 21-6.

Norfolk residents captured top honors in the Masters Division, as Chuck Lake defeated Bernard Jaffe in a close match. Third place was won by Red Martin of Fort Eustis, Va., who defeated Bruno Giordano 21-17, 21-14. Red Martin, #1 seed in the masters division was upset by runner-up Bernard Jaffe in a long three hour match during semi-final action.

1975 and 1976 Virginia State champion, Carol Frenk of Newport News, Va. easily won the womens division with a 21-11, 21-7 final match victory over Patti Gurson of Pittsburgh, Pa. The womens competition featured a double elimination format with third place going to Sue Cumming of Va. Beach, Va. Miss Cumming is the 1976 Womens Va. State runner-up while Miss Gurson is a former regional champion.

The Jewish Community Center of Norfolk hosted the tournament, and provided an outstanding hospitality room which was greatly enjoyed by all. A banquet was held on Sunday night for all participants and guests. The George Washington Classic is planned as an annual tournament for the top east coast racquetballers.

Glenn R. Allen
Virginia Beach, Va.



Standing: G. T. Marinkovich—Tournament Director; Open A: Gary Nygard—1st; Terry Spear—2nd; Jim Farrell—3rd; Dave St. Pierre—Consolation; Hank Stish—WMC Dean.

Kneeling: Open B-C: Dan Green—1st; Terry Vanderpan—2nd; Dave Guth—3rd; Tony Ciapusci—Consolation.

Virginia

George Washington's birthday was celebrated in Norfolk, Va., with the first annual Jewish Community Center, George Washington Racquetball Classic. The tournament took place on the holiday weekend of 14, 15 and 16 February 1976, and attracted over 50 racquetball enthusiasts from Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Delaware and Washington, D.C., who participated in mens open singles, seniors singles and masters singles, and womens singles competition.

In the prestigious open singles division, Norfolk JCC athletic

director, Ed Taylor took top honors, winning a close three game match from Buzz Parker of Ft. Monroe, Va., 21-14, 19-21 and 21-14 in the finals. Taylor, who was not seeded, participated despite a serious abdominal injury, and was forced to three games in all his tournament matches. Semi-final action in the open singles resulted in Ed Taylor defeating Glenn Allen, Va. Beach, Va., 13-21, 21-7, 21-11 and Buzz Parker topping George Long from Dahlgren, Va., 16-21, 21-16, 21-8. Third place was captured by George Long who defeated Glenn Allen 9-21, 21-6 and 21-10. Two of the top four seeds in the open

Tidewater Invitational

The first Annual Tidewater Invitational Racquetball Tournament was successfully completed on the weekend of March 19-21, 1976. This year's tournament featured the top racquetball players from North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and Washington D.C., with 55 entries in the Mens open singles and 17 entries in the Mens Seniors division. The tournament was held at the beautiful Norfolk, Va. YMCA which features four fully air conditioned, tournament designed courts, a fully equipped health club and hotel rooms at bargain prices for all participants.

The prestigious mens open singles division was won by Delaware State Singles Champion, and the tournament's fourth seed, Willie Wang of Newark, Del., who defeated number one seed, Stan Weinstein of Norfolk, Va., 21-6, 21-20, in the finals. Third place was captured by Captain David Beard, USMC, from Cherry Point, N.C. Marine Corp Air Station, who defeated Charles Sullivan of College Park, Md., 18-21, 21-8 and 21-10 in a grueling two hour match. Enroute to the finals, both Wang and Weinstein experienced tough competition; as Wang defeated Jim Bailey of Havlock, N.C. 17-21, 21-2 and 21-13 in the quarter-finals and Beard, 21-10, 10-21, 21-15 in the semi-finals. Weinstein defeated Clay McCaskey of Richmond, Va. in probably the best match of the tournament, 21-16, 11-21, and 21-20 in quarter-final action, and then beat Sullivan 21-18, 21-17 in the semi-finals. Number two seed, Capt. Buzz Parker, U.S. Army, Ft. Monroe, Va., forfeited to Beard in the quarter-finals due to a shoulder injury.

In Seniors action, 1976 Va. State Seniors Champion, and number one seeded Bill Buckman of Richmond, Va. defeated John Devlin from Glen Dale, Md. 21-8, 21-20. Third place went to LtCol Chuck Lake, U.S. Army, from Va. Beach, who won by forfeit over Walter Wales, also of Va. Beach. The only upset recorded in the Seniors was

accomplished by unseeded Walter Wales, who defeated third seeded Alan Baynard of Trappe, Md. 21-19, 21-19 in the quarter-finals.

To insure all participants were given the opportunity to play at least two tournament matches; open and seniors consolation tournaments were scheduled for all first and second round losers. This arrangement resulted in a draw of 32 for open singles consolation, and nine entries in the seniors consolation. In the open consolation, Charlie Watrous of Va. Beach defeated Don Ozmar of Greensboro, N.C. 21-6, 21-15 to capture the first place trophy. Richard Highlander of Hampton, Va. bested George Tselepis of Alexandria, Va. 21-20, 18-21 and 21-19 in a very close match to win the seniors consolation.

The First Tidewater Invitational Racquetball Tournament was organized by the Norfolk YMCA Racquetball Club under the direction of Warren Chauncey, club president. Low priced entry fees of only \$7.00 per person were charged to all players to encourage participation. The entry fee included the cost of game balls for all matches, trophies, court fees, and souvenir athletic shirts for all participants. Additionally, a free buffet luncheon was prepared for all players and guests on the last two days of the tournament. Planning has already commenced for the Second Annual Tidewater Invitational, which will include Open Womens and Mens Masters divisions, in addition to the Mens Open and Seniors competition.

Glenn R. Allen

Wisconsin

Wausau-Woodson (Wisc.)

Two-time national champion Bill Schmidtke of Minneapolis won the singles title and combined with Mike Weum, also of Minneapolis to win the doubles title in the sixth annual Wausau Chemical—Woodson YMCA Racquetball Tournament January 16-18.

Dan Alder of Milwaukee was third in singles, while Gary Rivet of St. Paul downed Wausau's Jerry Hoff for the consolation title.

Schmidtke defeated five opponents on the way to his title. After an opening win over Ron Tanko of Stevens Point, he beat Wayne Graves of St. Paul, 21-3, 21-5, Roger Dolato of La Crosse, 21-12, 21-12, and nationally ranked Dan Alder of Milwaukee, 21-18, 21-8. In the championship contest, he beat nationally ranked Joe Wirkus of Milwaukee, 21-13, 21-10.

Alder's third place win came over Weum, 14-15, 15-7, 15-7.

After losing his first round game, 31-22, to Joe Derksen of Appleton, Hoff earned the consolation finals by beating Jerry Johnson of Sawyer Air Force Base, 31-25, Ron Merino, also of Sawyer, 31-10, and Jim Hall of Madison, 31-24. He lost the final set to Rivet, 21-9, 15-21, 21-11.

In doubles, Schmidtke and Weum started out by beating Ron and Carl Cook of Stevens Point, 31-7. They then defeated Bill Schultz and Joe Bechard of Milwaukee, 31-27. In the championship contest, they downed Bill Harper and Diz Kronenberg of Eau Claire, 21-14, 21-14.

Texas

Sheppard AFB, Texas

(First Round): Don Little def. C. E. Young 21-2, 21-5; Jim Boone def. Larry Russell 21-19, 21-12; Leo Drake def. Joe Cross 21-11, 21-12; W. R. Ethridge def. Eugene Barr 21-8, 21-10; Tim Watterson def. Larry Long 21-5, 21-2; Ron Peltier def. Bob Houslar 21-4, 21-7; Larry Plummer def. Mike Hudson 21-5, 21-7; Tom Maroney def. Charlie Lehman 21-0, 21-4; Jeff Apperson def. Joe Doles 21-9, 21-17; Al Ruiz def. Tom Scott 21-16, 12-21, 21-18; Terry Di Bella def. Ron Holcolmb 21-18, 16-21, 21-12.

(Second Round): John Novar def. Ron Cartwright, forfeit; Little def. J. E. Key 21-6, 21-2; Joe Davis def. Boone 21-12, 21-19; Drake def. Claude Brown 21-11, 21-18; Glenn Passey def. Ethridge 21-5, 21-6; Watterson def. Jim Craft, forfeit; Peltier def. Jim Traynor; Doug Davis def. Rich Casey 21-3, 21-2; Randy Morger def. Joe Crawford 21-3, 21-5; Plummer def. John Randall 21-0, 21-0; Maroney def. Lee Townsend 21-16, 21-13; Apperson def. Larry Spencer, forfeit; Ruiz def. Terry Mayfield 21-18, 21-17; Mike Anderson def. Robert Wright 21-12, 21-14; Di Bella def. Bob Mills, forfeit; Mark Greene def. Bob Fields 21-7, 21-12.

(Third Round): Little def. Novar 21-1, 21-0; Drake def. J. Davis forfeit; Passey def. Watterson 21-17, 21-12; Peltier def. D. Davis, forfeit; Plummer def. Morger 21-9, 21-8; Apperson def. Maroney 13-21, 21-14, 21-12; Anderson def. Ruiz, forfeit; Di Bella def. Greene 21-18, 19-21, 21-15.

(Quarter-finals): Little def. Drake, forfeit; Peltier def. Passey 21-18, 13-21, 21-8; Plummer def. Apperson 21-9, 21-11; Di Bella def. Anderson 21-10, 18-21, 21-18.

(Semi-finals): Little def. Peltier 21-8, 21-8; Plummer def. Di Bella 21-10, 21-14.

(Third place): Peltier def. Di Bella 21-8, 21-10.

(Championship): Little def. Plummer 21-14, 21-17.

players, many of whom are nationally seeded: Ev Dillin, Sue Dostal, Tanya Mauw, Camille McCarthy, Cathy Peterson, Koni Porter, Barb Tennessen and Judy Thompson.

The DAC's Women's Racquetball Committee, which planned the event, ran a refreshment stand throughout the weekend and handed out tournament T-shirts to all players. The winners received trophies.

One of the unique aspects of the DAC's tournament was that there were three singles classes. *"This provision allowed women to enter the tournament, who otherwise would not have entered an open event,"* said Marilyn Catt, chairwoman of the DAC Women's Racquetball Committee.

"Club members got a chance to see what women's racquetball is all about," she said. *"And many members took advantage of the opportunity; the spectator's gallery was packed throughout the tournament."*

"There's a new respect for the woman athlete in racquetball," said

Catt. *"Most people were impressed by the seriousness of these athletes."*

Certainly, at least four men athletes were impressed. The four—Grady Alderman, Bill Brown, Ed White and Mick Tingelhoff, players and former players for the Minnesota Vikings—played against four of the top women players in singles. These exhibition games took place after Saturday's tournament play and all four football players lost to the quick maneuvering and downright skill of the women.

For their good sportsmanship, the Vikings each got a specially-designed trophy, entitled *"The Most Confused Athlete,"* a figure of a runner with a football in one hand and a racquetball racquet in the other.

The Decathlon Club, a private club for men and women, has three racquetball courts and an active racquetball program for women. The February 13-15 tournament was the first major women's racquetball event ever sponsored by the DAC.

Anne Ludcke
St. Paul

Minnesota

Decathlon A. C.

Ev Dillin, representing the University of Minnesota, walked off with the Class AA singles trophy after a 21-20, 21-20 win over Koni Porter, Edina King's Court, in the Decathlon Athletic Club (DAC) Women's Open Racquetball Invitational Tournament, February 13-15.

Thirty players from three states entered the four divisions: Classes AA, A and B singles and open doubles. Among the women racquetballers were eight AA



One of the highpoints of the tourney was the exhibition games between the top women players and football players from the Minnesota Vikings. L to R: Sue Dostal, Ed White, Bill Brown, Koni Porter, Marilyn Catt, Grady Alderman, Judy Thompson and Mick Tingelhoff.



Left to right: Ralph Stillman, "Diz" Kronenberg, George Sladky

The Master Invitational Racquetball Tournament at The Court House in Minneapolis January 30th—February 1st attracted 14 players from Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin. All entrants received a copy of a Kathi Kreatez' racquetball caricature for participating.

"Diz" Kronenberg, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the top seed, won the championship in two straight over Ralph Stillman, Minneapolis 21-8, 21-15. In the first game Stillman made 10 errors and Kronenberg was flawless with his "roll-out" forehand and fantastic positioning. He controlled the game from the first serve. In the second game,

Stillman started hitting the left hand corner with his backhand, from all over the court—sidewall/frontwall—and forced the game until Kronenberg hit four forehand kills and broke the game open for a win. George Sladky of Minneapolis took third place with a 21-12, 21-15 win over John Brandrup, Rochester, Minn.

Kronenberg at 53 was the oldest tournament player and Ralph Stillman at 45 in Dec. the youngest. A good time was had by all as the food was super, the play superb and matches were played on schedule.

Amos Rosenbloom
Minneapolis

Illinois

The sixth annual Illinois State singles tournament, the largest tournament in the state each season, again held that honor as 256 entrants competed in seven different brackets March 1-4 at the Evanston Court Club, just north of Chicago.

The tournament was wide open, especially in the coveted Men's A singles where five time defending champ Ron Rubenstein declined to enter. Last year's runner-up, University of Illinois student Jeff Bowman, captured the title

defeating Northbrook's Gil Schmitt in the finals 21-6, 19-21, 11-4.

The Women's Open featured the usual Sue Carow-Jean Sauser battle and for the third consecutive year Carow took the championship, rather convincingly this time 21-10, 21-17.

Illinois Racquetball Association president Fred Blaess successfully defending his state seniors crown, topping unseeded Art Michaely, Palatine in the finals 21-20, 21-6. Michaely upset seventh seed Paul Franks in the second round 19 and eight.

The largest number of entries, as expected came in the Men's B division where 104 players vied for the number one spot. And by the time the semi-finals rolled around, none of the top seeds were left. Park Ridge's Cliff Minter defeated St. Charles' Mark Coleman for the championship in a thrilling 17-21, 21-6, 11-10 match.

Bob Troyer, the veteran Lake Forest player, regained his Masters singles crown by overtaking last year's winner Phil Dziuk, Champaign. Troyer, now over pressing arm problems, was a 21-12, 21-16 victor.

Steve Sulli easily captured the Juniors tourney, stopping Ken Stone in the final round 21-0, 21-19. Mary Plauche eked out a tight win over Cameron Dick to capture the Women's B title 18-21, 21-15, 11-9.

The tournament featured the first Illinois usage of the U.S.R.A.'s new 11-point tie-breaker for all third game matches. This, plus excellent planning and organization on the part of Evanston Court Club manager Lee Duda actually had the matches running ahead of schedule every day.

A Saturday night Italian Feast at the nearby Holiday Inn provided the players a chance to relax and shoot the breeze in a warm, congenial atmosphere.

There were many close and hard-fought matches along the way. One of the most exciting series involved Seniors player Joe Goldberg, Chicago who played three consecutive 11-10 tie-breakers, finally dropping the semi-final against Ed Lammersfeld 21-13, 12-21, 11-10. Goldberg upset tourney's third seed Bill Williamson, Champaign in the second round. Second seed Don Webb, Urbana, hampered by an injured wrist, was another second round loser, to Skokie's Ron Rashkow.

In the Men's Open, another missing entrant was U. of I.'s John Lynch, who had been expected to make a

strong run at the crown. But Lynch failed to have his entry in by deadline and no openings occurred.

Again, our thanks to Lee Duda, Jim Bronner, Dottie Trauscht, Tim Plum, Jim Harper, Bill Feigen and all the other people who helped make this tournament one of the best of the year.

Men's Open (Quarter-finals): Jeff Bowman, Urbana def. Jim Clemons, Chicago 21-4, 21-5; Terry Fancher, Northbrook def. John Treichler, Northbrook 21-20, 21-16; Larry Putterman, Skokie def. Tony Arneri, Chicago 21-2, 21-12; Gil Schmitt, Northbrook def. Lee Duda, Evanston 21-15, 21-11.

(Semi-finals): Bowman def. Fancher 21-15, 21-15; Schmitt def. Putterman 21-15, 21-11. **(Championship):** Bowman def. Schmitt 21-6, 19-21, 11-4.

Women's Open (Quarter-finals): Sue Carow, Glenview def. Carolyn Armstrong, Des Plaines 21-3, 21-1; Zelda Pollack, Des Plaines def. Linda Holder, Bloomington 21-6, 21-10; Bev Franks, Northbrook def. Hope Schwartz, Des Plaines 21-7, 21-8; Jean Sauser, Northbrook def. Georgia Maskalunas, Des Plaines 21-3, 21-4.

(Semi-finals): Carow def. Pollack 21-11, 21-3; Sauser def. Franks 21-5, 21-14.

(Championship): Carow def. Sauser 21-10, 21-17.

Seniors (Quarter-finals): Fred Blaess, Schaumburg def. Jim Harper, Evanston 21-3, 21-8; Tim Plum, Kenilworth def. Bob Breckenridge, Palatine 17-21, 21-11, 11-2; Ed Lammersfeld, Park Ridge, def. Joe Goldberg, Chicago 21-13, 12-21, 11-10; Art Michaely, Palatine def. Ron Rashkow, Skokie 21-20, 21-16.

(Semi-finals): Blaess def. Plum 21-9, 21-16; Michaely def. Lammersfeld 17-21, 21-17, 8-8 (injury default).

(Championship): Blaess def. Michaely 21-20, 21-6.

Masters (Quarter-finals): Phil Dziuk, Champaign def. Jack Burnstein, Chicago 21-5, 21-6; Cal Deuster, Des Plaines def. Nathaniel Reed, Itasca; Jack Schuberth, Des Plaines def. Marshall Stern, Chicago 21-11, 21-10; Bob Troyer, Lake Forest def. Bert Shulimson, Schaumburg 21-6, 21-10. **(Semi-final):** Dziuk def. Deuster 21-0, 21-4; Troyer def. Schuberth 21-8, 21-16. **(Championship):** Troyer def. Dziuk 21-12, 21-16.

Juniors (Quarter-finals): Ken Stone, Skokie def. Steve Breckenridge, Palatine 21-6, 21-8; Larry Hasselberger, Chicago def. Dan Sharps, Northbrook 21-5, 21-15; Jeff Siegal, Chicago def. Bruce Weiner, Chicago 8-21, 21-17, 11-4; Steve Sulli, Elmhurst def. Mark Berman, Skokie 21-4, 21-11.

(Semi-finals): Stone def. Hasselberger 21-4, 21-14; Sulli def. Siegal 21-14, 21-15.

(Championship): Sulli def. Stone 21-0, 21-19.

Men's B (Quarter-finals): Mark Coleman, St. Charles def. Tom Street, Morton Grove 21-17, 15-21, 11-7; Lee Casty, Chicago def. Stan Waksmundski, Chicago 21-4, 8-21, 11-2; Cliff Minter, Chicago def. John Deuwel,

Elgin 21-15, 21-9; Phil Mugavero, Chicago def. Rick Dern, Schaumburg 21-19, 21-11.

(Semi-finals): Coleman def. Casty 16-21, 21-20, 11-7; Minter def. Mugavero 8-21, 21-8, 11-1.

(Championship): Minter def. Coleman 17-21, 21-6, 11-10.

Women's B (Quarter-finals): Mary Plauche, Evanston def. Judy Ripp, Evanston 21-10, 16-21, 11-10; Theresa Anderson, Wheeling def. Sarah Houle, Chicago 10-21, 21-17, 11-7; Cameron Dick, Oak Park def. Hope Weisbach, Northbrook 21-17, 21-17; Sue Kleinman, Evanston def. Lenore Persky, Skokie 21-10, 21-1.

(Semi-finals): Plauche def. Anderson 21-3, 21-8; Dick def. Kleinman 21-8, 19-21, 11-2.

(Championship): Plauche def. Dick 18-21, 21-15, 11-9.

Tour Results ATC

Just completed at the Aurora, Illinois YMCA was the 1st National Air Traffic Controller's Racquetball Tournament. Controllers from all over the United States assembled to play in Aurora's famed courts. First place honors went to Bob Leach from Ft. Worth, Texas, while second place went to John Tuszl from Bolingbrook, Illinois. The team championship was won by the controllers from the Chicago Air Route Traffic Control Center.



The Rev. James J. Close, Superintendent of Mercy Mission, a home for boys at 1140 W. Jackson Blvd., presents the awards to the finalists in the Archdiocesan Clergy Racquetball Tournament last Thursday evening at Mercy Mission Court.

On the left is the Rev. Paul Reicher pastor of St. James Church, Maywood, Ill., who placed second and on the right is the Rev. Charles Cronin pastor of St. Thaddeus Church, 9540 S. Harvard who won first place.

The first annual Mercy Mission Clergy Racquetball tournament was held in March with the championship match being played March 11.

It was a one sided affair, as the Rev. Charles Cronin of St. Thaddeus parish 9540 S. Harvard, devastated his opponent the Rev. Paul Reicher of St. James parish, Maywood, by the scores of 21-6, 21-6.

Cronin's game plan worked as he got his momentum going at the onset and pursued every ball, keeping Reicher off balance with his variety of returns. "I had to stick with this game plan," remarked Cronin after his victory, "because if I didn't Reicher would have nailed me to the wall at the first opportunity and I would have lost the driver's seat."

Awards were presented after the contests by the Superintendent of Mercy Mission, the Rev. James J. Close. The North and South Sections runners-up were the Rev. Phil Dressler of Our Lady Help of Christians parish 832 N. Le Claire, and the Rev. Dan Brady of Holy Trinity parish 916 S. Wolcott, both Chicago.

Sixty-five priests participated in the month long tournament which was sponsored by Mercy Mission/ Mission Press and directed by John P. Connolly Administrative Assistant to the Rev. James J. Close. All matches were played on Mercy Missions one court.

John P. Connolly

Connecticut

The First Annual U.S.R.A. Connecticut State Open

The U.S.R.A. Connecticut Racquetball Association was pleased to hold its first annual Connecticut Open Racquetball Tournament January 16, 17, 18, 1976 at the Hartford YMCA. This was the largest tournament of its kind ever held in Connecticut, drawing over 120 entries from eight states throughout the Eastern U.S.

In the OPEN SINGLES competition, Charlie Garfinkel, Buffalo, NY defeated Mike Romano, Fitchburg, Mass. 21-16, 21-12, to capture the open title. In the semi-finals, Garfinkel had a tough match with Leo Marsocci, Rochester, NY, going three games 18-21, 21-7, 21-8. To move into the finals, Romano displayed top form to take Mike Luciw of New Britain, CT 21-5, 21-5.

OPEN DOUBLES brought together the former (1972) National Doubles Champs George Rudysz and Luciw, New Britain to defeat the team of Romano and Marsocci 21-9, 21-13. In the semi-finals another well known doubles team, Don Wallace and Bob Yellin of New Britain, CT (1970 National Doubles Champs) were defeated by Marsocci-Romano 21-10, 21-13 while Rudysz-Luciw defeated Pat Colombo and Ed Castillo, of Port Chester, NY 21-13, 21-13.

Colombo, Port Chester, NY and one of the top senior players in the country, defeated Tom Vrola, Paterson, NJ 21-7, 7-21, 21-6 to win the SENIOR title. Colombo defeated Emil Downey of East Hartford, CT 21-6, 21-9, while Vrola took Mike Morrin of Glastonbury, CT 21-11, 6-21, 21-18 to compete for the finals.

In WOMEN'S SINGLES, Heather Marshall, Simsbury, CT defeated Ann Rothberg of West Hartford, CT, 21-10, 21-16. Sue Churchill of Portland, Maine topped Gerry Rudysz, New Britain, CT for third.

Marshall teamed up with Rudysz to

win the women's doubles. Mary Dee and JoAnne Johnson of Burlington, VT came in second.

The B SINGLES, which was the most popular bracket, brought together many fine, new players. Al Christian, Broadbrook, CT was victorious over Harvey Goldstein, West Hartford, CT 21-15, 21-4. Richard Flewelling, Fairfield, Maine defeated Dave Matulis, New Britain, CT for third.

Over the weekend, the Connecticut Association had a pool party at the Sheraton-Hartford Hotel. At the party the players drank beer, had fun, and discussed more tournaments and the need of establishing a solid Eastern division.

The Connecticut Racquetball Association would like to send a special word of thanks to all the people who helped make this first tournament a success, the referees, hostesses and the Y staff. THANKS AGAIN!

George and Gerry Rudysz
U.S.R.A. Connecticut State
Chairmen

Ohio

Columbus, Ohio

The sixth annual Columbus, Ohio City Racquetball tournament was held at the Central Y.M.C.A. February 13-15. Thirty players entered Open and Masters singles divisions.

Last year's open champion, Dr. John Norton, Columbus was eliminated in the semi-finals by Les Armstrong, Zanesville. A new city champion was crowned when Don Schiefer, Columbus Y def. Gene Erwine, Zanesville Y. Art Payne, Columbus Y retained the Masters crown which he won last year by defeating Dick Fairchild, Marion.

Open Results (Quarter-finals): Les Armstrong, Zanesville def. John Norton, Columbus 21-18, 21-18; Gene Erwine, Zanesville def. Doug Martin, Ashland Chemical 21-12, 21-7; Don Schiefer, Columbus Y def. Bob Levy, Columbus J.C.C. 21-5, 21-6; George Geisbuhler, Columbus Y def. Rod Nara, Ashland Chemical 21-9, 21-13.

(Semi-finals): Erwine def. Armstrong 21-18, 21-16; Schiefer def. Geisbuhler 14-21, 21-8, 21-16.

(Championship): Schiefer def. Erwine 21-11, 21-6.

(Consolation): Mike Thomas, Marion def. Leo Neff Zanesville 21-15, 21-15.

Masters Results (Semi-finals): Art Payne, Columbus Y def. Scotty Patrick, Ashland Chemical 21-4, 21-8; Dick Fairchild, Marion Y def. Bill White, Columbus Y 21-16, 21-17.

(Consolation): John Gibbons, Columbus Y def. Joe Brigrmore, Marion Y 31-24.

(Championship): Payne def. Fairchild 21-11, 21-7.

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Colloquial Keeleyisms

(This is the re-birth of just-published author Steve Keeley's glossary of racquetball terminology, segments of which have been carried from time to time within these pages. Although what follows is both humorous and anecdotal, his major effort, The Complete Book of Racquetball, D.B.I. Publishers, Northfield, Illinois is an outstanding instructional book which will soon be excerpted in National Racquetball,—ed.)

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RB-1

If you can't play the game all that well, at least take five and digress into its communicative network. From outa the voice box and offa the tongue, look out hackers, here it comes! Peruse more verbose offerings in an endless potpourri of racquetball nomenclature. From the court thesaurus: **Keeleyisms!**

Reading—To pick up visual signals by observing the opponent that may aid in anticipating the ensuing shot. For example, when a player bends down to take a shot below his knees, the defensive man should edge toward the front wall in anticipation of a kill shot. But when a player assumes a more erect position by taking the shot above his waist, the defensive man may safely occupy a more posterior court station. When the shooter's lead foot points toward the right, anticipate a kill or pass to the right. If the front foot points left, expect a shot in that direction.

A most illustrative example of **reading** occurred in my second round match in the 1970 State of Michigan paddleball tournament. Midway through the first game I noticed my rival **hyperventilate** slightly each time he attempted a kill shot. It was just a short sip of air; a psychological psyching up for the kill try with a subtle physical manifestation. From that point on, the match was a cake walk. Every time I observed a hiccup-like-inhalation, I waltzed to the front court to cover the forecasted kill attempt.

Road Runner—A player whose specialty is hustle and retrieving the ball. Today's paragon of gettability is that tennis shoed mosquito sometimes mistaken as a human being, Steve Strandemo. Off the tournament court, Strandemo is a workaholic with a masochist's drive for conditioning, and a practically divine drive for perfection.

On the tournament court, his preparation becomes evident with amazing retrieves and physical durability, plus a competitive nature that looks like a gladiator storming into battle and sounds like the snorting and stomping of a buck moose in season.

Rollout—Kill shot, bottom boarder, flat kill. If it has been a long time since you last smote a perfect bottom boarder, rejoice in the words of our local Y.M.C.A. champ, Elmer Einstein, "A rollout is that which one gets sooner or later when one places 100 monkeys in a court with 100 racquets and 100 balls,—and, of course, an indefinite amount of time."

Portsider—Left handed player, lefty, southpaw.

Pushing off—Illegal touching or shoving the opponent to gain momentum or position. Result is a point or side out.

Safety hinder—Interruption of play when continued action could result in injury. For example, a mercy ball (held up swing) or foreign object on the court.

San Diego—the Mecca of racquetball. This is the hottest of racquetball hotbeds where, it is said, a player visits and improves his game 100% through osmosis. Come learn to be a pro in two easy lessons.

Not quite, but this sunshine and racquet capital of Southern California boasts many of the game's V.I.P.'s. Such bubble gum card collector delights as Muehleisen, Loveday and Brumfield claim this as their home town. Other supereminents have emigrated: Steve Serot (*St. Louis*), Richard Wagner (*Paterson, New Jersey*), Steve Strandemo (*St. Cloud, Minnesota*), Steve Keeley (*Jackson, Michigan*), Charlie Drake and Len Baldori (*both Michigan*) and two who came and went back Mike

Zeitman (*Louisville-San Diego-Memphis*) and Dan Alder (*Michigan-San Diego-Milwaukee*). Horace Greeley's advice on the land of opportunity certainly applies to racquetball.

So, San Diego is a brilliant light toward which all wandering court bugs are drawn. Long-time San Diego residents prefer another analogy, with perhaps a hint of xenophobia. San Diego, they say, is the core of the racquetball apple and all the worms eventually find their way here . . . and the core grows increasingly rotten.

And here we are in rotten Diego, treating our tennis shoes less as foot apparel than as funny exotic pets to be pampered and footsied, waiting for more bugs and worms to arrive.

Sawdust ball—skip ball, short shot, oilwell ball, peanut butter shot (with a little *Skippy* on it), splinter ball, dirt ball, ground ball.

Shooter—An aggressive player whose game strategy revolves around a constant barrage of kill shots. One who adheres to the offensive theory of play and attempts to kill a high percentage of shots (as opposed to a control player).

Until recently, the stud gorilla in the racquetball jungle has been the control player, not the shooter. Lately however, the pure shooters from out east (Hogan, Wagner, Serot, Hilecher) have been unsettling those seat-of-their-pants court technicians with their theories of control and avocation of angles. To these young power players there are just two shots, a fast ball and a *faster* ball. Whoever happens to be hitting the fastest ball is temporarily king of the jungle.

Straddle ball—Sometimes a hinder, sometimes not a hinder, sometimes an emasculator. A ball which

passes through the legs of one of the players on the rebound off the front wall. This is a hinder only if the person playing the ball is physically or visually impeded from making his shot.

Swish—Sound made by the racquet strings traveling swiftly through the air when the wrist breaks at the potential point of ball contact. Sounds like Superman flying past a phone booth.

Technical—Call made by the referee during tournament play usually because of unsportsmanlike antics. One point is subtracted from the score of the player responsible for the infraction. Thus, it is possible for a player's score to be minus-one.

Tension—Amount of pressure at which a racquet is strung. Normal string tension ranges from 26-32 pounds. Any less than 26 and the racquet hits like a butterfly net; any more than 32 and it hits like a board. Most top players agree the optimal tension is 26-28 pounds. Remember, the strings loosen up two to four pounds after a week of play.

THE Player—(Synonyms: *Mr. Racquetball, The People's Champion*) He is the flawless model of physical and mental court virtues. Though some insist otherwise, he does *not* exist. Mere description is difficult enough . . .

The mind of a 65-year-old physicist housed within the body of an 18-year-old animal athlete. Fleet feet! Rattlesnake reflexes! Coyote stamina! Nuclear strokes! Unparalleled cerebral game!

THE player's effortless swing encroaches on perpetual motion, yet he smashes every ball to smithereens. Each shot is a death stroke. And what gamesmanship! Within minutes his veteran shenanigans whip the crowd into a rabid frenzy. The people stomp

their hands and clap their feet. Women swoon, men shiver and children scream in glee.

You say this isn't particularly descriptive of you? You swing a mean club foot but a ludicrous racquet stroke? Amoeba man reflexes! Mental quickness of an inebriated slub! Myopic court coverage! All-pro sweater! Your uncoordinated waddle about the court evokes shudders of sympathy within the crowd. Men, women, and children excuse themselves to visit the john. Join the crowd!

Thursday afternoon player—The individual who plays a stupendous game on Thursday. Pin-point kills, crisp passes, etc. But when tournament time comes around on *Friday*, he is an all-star court clutz. High kills, higher passes, etc. **The Thursday afternoon player** is the classical victim of paralysis via analysis, the choke, the psyche out and blinkus of the thinkus.

Trigger finger grip—Normal method of grasping the racquet handle as though it were a pistol. Thus, there is a small space between the index and middle fingers. This allows the hand to cover a greater area of the handle for more racquet control (as opposed to the fist grip).

Turning point—Specific time during a game or match that is considered crucial, often due to a shift in momentum. Sometimes earmarks the start of a comeback.

Volley—(two definitions) 1) (from *handball*) synonymous with rally. The course of play following the serve return during which the rival players alternately hit the ball. 2) (from *tennis*) to strike the ball prior to its bounce on the floor, i.e., to smote the sphere on the fly. Sound strategy calls for taking the ball on the volley whenever possible if you are not positioned in back court. The volley is especially desirable in returning a soft (*garbage, soft Z*) serve. Also: fly shot, fly kill.

Who Will Win

The Nationals

Each year I take it upon myself to predict the outcome of the National Championships. In years past I have been correct on three occasions ('72, '73, '75) and made no predictions in '71 and '74. Coincidentally, my three correct predictions were the three years Charlie Brumfield captured the title, and the two missing years were both won by Bill Schmidtke.

Honestly, it was no trick of clairvoyance to be able to select Brumfield as the man of the hour in those years. Charlie's game was years ahead of his competitors,—threatened only by Schmidtke's dangerous forehand streak shooting, and occasionally by Serot's 15-year-old, kill-every-ball philosophy.

Even a year ago, the second season for the N.R.C.'s pro tour, it was Brumfield all the way. In Las Vegas, the Brum was at the top of his game, possibly playing the best single racquetball tournament in the game's history.

But things have changed. New players, better players, smarter and faster players. Quick players, patient players, control and shooting players. The distance between Brumfield and the field has narrowed considerably, if not closed altogether.

In the six tour stops prior to publication of this issue, Brumfield won three,—more than any other player. An impressive statistic, no doubt,—except that a 50 per cent winning ratio for Brumfield is like Robin Hood splitting the arrow half the time. Prior to his first loss of the season (Vermont, October '75) he had won 20 consecutive tournaments!

What has happened to the People's Champ?

"If I was playing well," begins Brum's explanation after each loss, *"there's no way I'd lose to these guys."*

True and false. True, he may not be playing quite the ball he was a year ago. False, that he'd never lose. Racquetball's pro tour is changing and Brumfield is falling slightly from his pedestal for two reasons: 1) the competition is better and 2) he is more active than ever in outside business activities, i.e., lack of concentration in tournament preparation.

To make the immediate outlook ever more apprehensive for Brumfield is that every time he loses, a chunk of that invincibility aura is chipped away, giving his opponent's that slight bit of confidence they have lacked when walking on the court against him.

Seventeen-year-old Hogan topped him in Vermont; Strandemo had him on the ropes in Tucson; each match was a battle in Aurora; he barely reached the finals in Milwaukee and then lost to Hogan again; and in Buffalo he came up short against Hilecher in the quarters. Is this the record of a national champ?

Despite the negative persuasion above, I say yes, this is the record of a national champ, and a damn good record for a damn good champ. As racquetball grows there will be more winners and fewer players dominating the game. We will evolve, grow, prosper and therefore, grow some more. Brumfield will never dominate racquetball as he once did,—but he'll still win his share, continue to do racquetball a great promotional service,—and oh yes, he'll also win this year's National Professional Championship in San Diego. I predict it, and here's why Charlie will and those rated a chance won't (with approximate odds).

One final note,—I consider each and every one of these players my personal friend and any negative comments are made strictly as constructive criticism.

Charlie Brumfield, San Diego...7-2

One of the best reasons for expecting Brumfield to repeat his title is the biological make-up of his closest pursuers,—Hogan, Wagner and Serot, the only players I give any real chance of wresting the crown away from Brum. Their problem is youth.

Brumfield has experience,—and when you're competing for the National title and \$15,000 in prize money, experience can bring you a long, long way. Brumfield has been there before, many times. He will not choke, he will play steady, percentage racquetball,—and that's what wins when you get down to the nitty-gritty of the Nationals.

Brumfield's problems as explained earlier still exist, to be sure. But Charlie more than anybody, recognizes these and will take the necessary steps to rectify them.

Brumfield's first step will be to increase his preparation for the Nationals, table business obligations for a few months and get down to some serious racquetball work. The fact that he will have almost six weeks from Peoria to San Diego will work in his favor. The lay-off will not hurt his game, and will give him the chance to enhance it.

The second reason Brumfield will win is pride. He is fiercely proud of his play and with the Nationals in his home town he has an additional incentive to win. Especially because he failed in front of his home town San Diego crowd the only other year the Nationals were there,—1974.

Add to that the fact that he needs to win,—to make those outside businesses and endorsements worthwhile leads to the unescapable conclusion,—if he doesn't take the title,—he'll just about die trying.



Charlie Brumfield



Marty Hogan

Marty Hogan, St. Louis...4-1

The only player on tour who has shown a consistent ability to play Brumfield even has been Hogan. A greatly matured player in the last year, Hogan's game has improved immensely, no great revelation when you look at his tour wins and prize money earnings.

But what about the other side of the coin? Everybody remembers the great Hogan wins,—nobody talks about the losses. Wagner's mesmerization over Hogan is nearing Brumfield-over-Serot proportions. Any of the players below him can take him and they know it.

Perhaps this is balanced by Hogan's outstanding game, and the realization that when his serve is on, he is almost unbeatable. He is a fine shooter, and with more and more of his concentration on the match instead of the gallery, he will be a formidable foe for Brumfield and the field.

But I don't think serve and shoot will win the Nationals. There's too much pressure to make those serves just perfect,—those kills

exact roll-outs. And a hard hitter like Hogan will leave opponents more than a fair share of shots.

And then there's the track record. Hogan, although admittedly a much better player now, performed dismally in the Nationals last year in Vegas. His loss to Vic Niederhoffer in the round of 32, not to take anything away from Vic's accomplishment, was an all-time choke, a very deserving loss.

I'm not convinced that Hogan can handle the pressure.

Richard Wagner, San Diego . . . 5-1

A year-and-a-half ago nobody knew who Richard Wagner was. Right now he is a real somebody in pro racquetball. A struggling tour rookie last season has matured and progressed into a real 20-year-old contender.

Speed, fluidity, kills and a good head should make Wagner a semi-finalist in San Diego. The aroma of confidence fills the court when Wagner steps through the door. He believes in himself and his ability, and he can handle the tight spots.

Yet Wagner, at age 20 has still to make his mark in the Nationals and he still has to prove he can consistently beat the other contenders. Although he has beaten Hogan twice, neither has been easy; he caught Keeley at the low ebb of Steve's game; Bledsoe gives him fits; he's never beaten Serot in pro play; and he has a habit of going three games too often.

But going into Peoria Wagner was playing the best ball of them all,—with semi-final finishes in Aurora and Milwaukee and the title in Buffalo.

He's probably the best back wall shooter in the game right now, especially on ceiling balls that go that route. His backhand is solid and his forehand has stopped vibrating when it sees a plum. He is second to none in retrieving ability.

Wagner could win it all; but for him more than anybody, the draw will be important. If he should run into Brumfield or Serot in the quarters, he won't go any farther. If the luck of the draw finds him on the other side, he should be cashing a nice big finals check in San Diego.



Steve Serot, San Diego . . . 5-1

Based on tournament credentials Serot does not deserve this high a consideration, at least not this season. But I've got a hunch. The hunch is he'll be healthy.

Steve has an idiotic notion in his head that he has to dive, dive, and dive some more to win. Making those seemingly unbelievable gets makes him the darling of most crowds, but wreaks havoc on his body and will undoubtedly shorten his career. He has been hurt all season,—an elbow in Vermont, an ankle in Tucson, a shoulder in Milwaukee which forced him to the sidelines in Buffalo.

But the time off should have helped his game. What Serot has needed all season is practice. Duties with sponsor Leach Industries plus the rigors of pre-dental classes at San Diego State have put Serot everywhere but where he needs to be,—on the court.

Now that he is healed physically, and assuming he has reverted to the one thing he does best, namely shoot the ball,—he will be a real contender.

Many people have expected many things from 19-year-old Steve, ever since he burst on the scene a few years ago as Superboy. Well, he wasn't Superboy then, and he isn't now. But he is a veteran, if still young, and he still has the ability. Without the pressure of being expected to win,—Steve just might do it. If somebody knocks off Brumfield, Serot becomes the favorite.



Richard Wagner

Steve Strandemo, San Diego...8-1

It's been a long season for Steve Strandemo, over five months since he's reached the semi-finals. And it's been quite a shock for last year's second ranked player. One of the game's most intelligent, Steve has been trying everything to figure out why he's not reaching 21 as often as he used to.

Actually, the reason is simple: the better competition has really hurt him, more than any other player. Strandemo's game is control, it always has been. And other than Charlie Brumfield, Strandemo is the supreme control player today. In fact that's why I've rated him 8-1 and not further down the line.

However, if the better competition and outside business duties have hurt Brumfield, imagine what it should have (and did) do to Strandemo, who plays the same game, just not quite as well. The expected effect occurred: Steve began losing.

And although he has not shown any signs of improvement recently, the six weeks preparation will be to his advantage. He won't change his game style,—that would be disaster, but he must find a way to cope with the serve and shooters, the kids. If he does, he's in good shape. But if he meets them early, when they're loose and confident,—it could be a short Nationals for Strandemo.



Steve Strandemo

Bill Schmidtke



Bill Schmidtke, Minneapolis...10-1

The sentimental favorite for the national title has to be 34-year-old Bill Schmidtke, two-time former champ in 1971 and 1974. Bill's age coupled with the youth of the players ahead of him have put a dent in his performances this season, with the exception of his fine second place showing in Buffalo.

I don't really think Schmidtke can win the Nationals, but every time somebody counts out the likeable Minnesotan, he turns around and plays fantastic racquetball.

He's playing his best ball of the season right now, however, and when Bill gets his shots going, he's tough to stop,—no matter who the opponent.

But Big Bill hasn't really had any big wins this year,—two over Bledsoe and a few others,—but none against the real top boys, otherwise. He's certainly capable of topping anyone, and the one match a day schedule of the Nationals will aid him here. But Schmidtke can't stand the fast pace of the young studs and therefore I figure him to reach the quarters, but to struggle from there.

Dave Bledsoe, Memphis...10-1

A few eyebrows may be raised when they see how far down the list I've got Bledsoe. The likeable Memphian has won more money to date than either Serot or Strandemo above, and has some fine finishes to his credit.

Like Hogan and Wagner, this is Bledsoe's first solid season on the tour. But unlike Hogan and Wagner, Bledsoe has yet to prove he can win the big one. He lost early to Serot in the Vegas Nationals last season and just hasn't convinced me that he's ready to make a real run for the title.

In between some good victories are these facts: he barely beat an ailing Serot in Tucson; he stopped a nervous Wagner and succumbed rather meekly to Brumfield in Aurora; was blown out by Hogan in Milwaukee and lost disappointingly to Schmidtke in Buffalo. Is this the



Dave Bledsoe

record on which to build the National Championship? I don't think so.

Bledsoe could surprise me though. His speed is legend, his right corner kills deadly and his head is on straight. He may be hungry for the title, but I've got a feeling he won't reach the round where you play for it.

Jerry Hilecher, St. Louis . . . 15-1

There is only one man who will have anything to do with how well Jerry Hilecher does in San Diego. That one man is Jerry Hilecher.

Only once this season have we been privileged to see even a glimpse of the great ability this lean, 21-year-old has. That was in his upset win over Brumfield in Buffalo. I'm calling that win a fluke (based on Jerry's otherwise poor N.R.C. season). He followed his quarter-final Brumfield victory with a semi-final loss to Schmidtke, hardly the consistency needed to reach the \$4,000 first prize in San Diego.

Bogged down by schoolwork (University of Missouri) and lack of courts or competition has had a definite adverse effect on his game. Jerry needs to play, practice and play some more. He needs to sharpen his shooting so that he can quit thinking about it and just hit the shots.

Hilecher is capable of that first or even second upset. But he lacks the control and steadiness it will take to win the Nationals. In fact, 15-1 may be a gift.



Jerry Hilecher

Steve Keeley, San Diego . . . 15-1

The way Keeley has played the past few months, 15-1 may be a gift too. I hope I'm wrong, but unless somebody lights a firecracker under Keeley he may just swish away in San Diego.

Somewhere Steve Keeley has lost his pride and his desire. Initially he explained his lacklusterness as good play on the part of his opponents, that he played the same way every time out, giving his best, and then accepting victory or defeat whichever came.

Well, a champion never accepts defeat. A competitor gives more than his physical best. An athlete must want to win to be able to win. Steve Keeley used to be a great athlete, tremendous competitor and potential champion. Today he is not even a poor athlete, he refuses to compete and has no chance to be a champion. The causes for his lack of dedication have by-in-large been remedied by the N.R.C. (see *January, '76 N.R. Interview*).

Behind all the smoke of independence, uniqueness, individuality and so-what-if-I-lose attitude lays the real crux of Steve Keeley's problem,—he is deathly afraid of failure. By assuming an it-doesn't-matter philosophy he has cushioned the blow of possible failure. It will take a miraculous psychological reversal for Keeley to take the Nationals that, sadly, he has the ability to win.



Craig McCoy, Riverside, California . . . 20-1

Another of the hot-and-cold players on the fringe of top eight, McCoy is capable of an upset or two, but that's about it. Easy-going Craig is just that,—too easy-going. At 18-years-old he has many fine years ahead of him, although he lacks the concentration to make a real run at the title this season.

When he's playing well he is beautiful to watch. Smooth, forceful strokes, excellent left-handed shooting, and fine back wall play mark his game. But lack of experience and competition (50% tour attendance this season) has not enabled him to sharpen his game under pressure situations.

McCoy is going to have to perk up and play more aggressively if he is to have any chance at all for even the semi's. A year ago he played poorly and lost to Ron Stom early in Las Vegas. If he doesn't want it bad enough, he may lose just as early in San Diego.



Craig McCoy

Steve Keeley



Mike Zeitman

Mike Zeitman, Memphis . . . 25-1

Mike Zeitman hasn't really played well all season. He's the only tour regular not to have made at least one visit to the semi-finals, a fact that must be causing him to doubt his own ability.

For years people have been telling him how much ability he does have and for years Mike has been playing as if he doesn't have it. So which is true?

What he does have is a strong body, lots of power and no consistency whatever. When he's hot (win over Strandemo in Milwaukee) he's not that hot, and when he's cold (seven and 10 against Hilecher in Buffalo) it's the ice age.

Does Zeitman have what it takes? Based on this '75-76 season's results to date, we'd say Mike doesn't have it, nor will he get it between now and the Nationals.

Ron Rubenstein, Chicago . . . 25-1

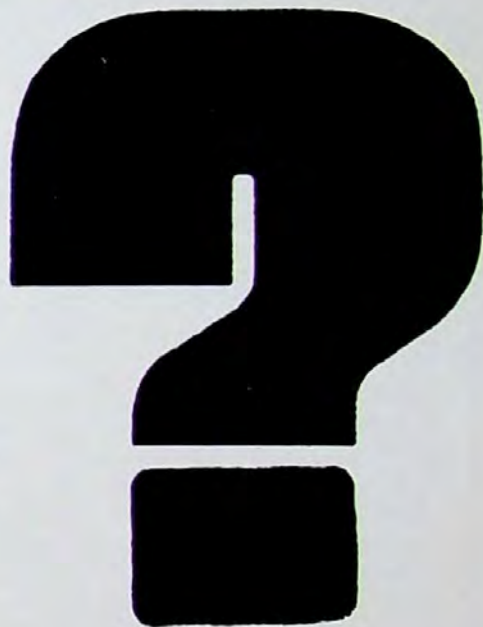
Rubenstein, if he shows, will cause a lot of grief to other players. He has the ability to be extremely tough (wins over McCoy, Keeley) for a round or two and that's enough to knock a few good boys out of the tournament.

But at age 36 Ruby does not have enough of the ability left to make a real go of it for the title. A good draw might get him to the quarters, but the kids are hitting too hard and running too far and fast for Ruby to be considered a serious contender.

He still has all the shots,—and the 11 point tie-breaker could work to his advantage. If he draws one of the kids, look for him to upset, but go no farther than the quarters.



Ron Rubenstein



National Racquetball

EXTRA

General News

Tie-Breaker Now Official

Tie-breaker, the 11 point third game, is now official in all U.S.R.A. and N.R.C. tournaments.

"Based on two professional tournaments and over a dozen amateur events, we have concluded that the tie-breaker is a positive and workable solution to a majority of tournament problems," said N.R.C. National Director Chuck Leve.

The official U.S.R.A.-N.R.C. rules will be amended to show the change to tie-breaker for all tournament play. As those who have tried it know, there are just a few additional rules governing the tie-breaker.

A five minute rest period will now become standard between the second game and the tie-breaker, making both rest periods uniform. Players will be allowed two time outs each

during the tie-breaker and there will be no ducece games,—11-10 will be a victory.

"Tie-breaker is the best new rule in racquetball in a long time," said Lee Duda, who ran the Illinois State Singles tournament at his Evanston Court Club near Chicago. *"We had over 250 entries and actually ran ahead of schedule."*

"The 11-point tie-breaker made the matches even more exciting," said John Doyle, president of Buffalo's Four Wall Courts, and host of the recent Buffalo Pro-Am. *"The players liked it, and the fans loved it."*

Tie-breaker has proven to be a God-send in many areas of competitive action. Here are some of them.

1. Matches in tournament play are kept on schedule making for shorter tournament hours

for players, fans, and tourney directors.

2. Everyday players will now have a better chance to finish a match within the allotted court time at their club instead of splitting and not being able to determine a winner.

3. The excitement of the matches is actually enhanced, not dampened, the pressure even greater.

4. Referees don't mind refereeing so much, when they know the third game is only to 11.

5. Underdog players have a better shot at an upset, which provides even better competition.

6. Players are less apt to "concede" either the first or second game, knowing the third game is only 11 points and anything can happen.

7. Players will be more fresh for the next round,

thereby testing racquetball skills, rather than conditioning. Yet over the long haul, conditioning will still be important.

8. Fans will be able to calculate the time of the match they want to watch, and for those watching more than one match,—the night won't drag on.

"Tie-breaker has been a huge success everywhere we've tried it," said Leve. *"We've tested with all sorts of rules changes in the past, but this one's the rule that will really help the game."*

All U.S.R.A.-N.R.C. tournaments will use tie-breaker, as will all sanctioned tournaments on every level, including the National Championships.

Tie-breaker is definitely here to stay.

Why You Should Enter A Tournament

By Ray Thompson

Ray Thompson is Vice-president in charge of tournaments for the Western New York Racquetball Association. By his own admission he is a low A player and has never won an open tournament.

After a year of experience in my position with the Western New York Racquetball Association I would like to share some observations and opinions with you.

We have not had the participation in tournaments that we expected. The growth of racquetball in the Buffalo area has been phenomenal, as area players realize every time they try to reserve a court. One would think that along with this growth in players would come an increase in the number of people entering our tournaments. This has not been the case.

The WNYRA tournaments have not grown in proportion with the general growth of racquetball. While we have more tournaments with the addition of C and Women's Divisions, when we look at the tournaments which have existed for several years we do not see any real growth. This disturbs me greatly.

The recent A Masters tournament is a prime example of the problem. We had a field of 11 players which is about the same as we had last year and the year before. Why is this? We have many men over 40 in the area, many who are fine players. Yet there was little interest in the tournament.

I questioned several members of this group as to why they did not enter. The feeling I received was basically that they knew they would not win the tournament. This is the crux of the problem. Many players feel they should only enter a tournament if they have a chance to win.

The main point I feel relates to my own experience at tournaments. I have entered a number of tournaments in the East and plan to enter many more. I have never entered a tournament with the expectation of winning. Realistically, there are four or five players in the East who will win most of those tournaments. Why then should I, a low 'A' player in a

local area enter the Eastern Regional Tournament? I enter because I expect several things from the tournament:

1. I expect to have a good time. Winning should not be, and for me, is not necessary to having a good time.
2. I expect to learn more about racquetball. Anyone who has entered any tournament will agree. They pick up something new, either through personal experience or observation that will help their game.
3. I expect to meet interesting people and to extend friendships. This is the greatest part of our game. We have great people playing racquetball.

4. I expect a mini vacation. Don't we all enjoy getting away from it all, even for an hour, day, or weekend?

These are the various reasons a low A player enters tournaments hundreds of miles from home. I feel these are the reasons that you should enter tournaments. The things I feel I gain from entering tournaments can be yours by doing just that.

I have said it many times and will say it again. Everyone who enters a tournament is important and necessary, both to the tournament and to the sport. Everyone has things to gain from entering.

Peoria Qualification System Adds New Concept to N.R.C. Pro Tour

When Peoria's Mike Hart, former owner of the Courtside court club in that well-publicized Illinois city, contacted the N.R.C. about hosting a stop on the pro tour, he wanted to do something special.

Mike's idea was to use his Peoria tournament as a stepping stone to the National Championships, an event bigger and more important than a regular tour stop, but not tarnishing in any way, the brilliance of the Nationals.

The answer was the Tournament of Champions. The idea was to up the prize money substantially, which Mike did by raising \$5,000 locally, and open the tournament to only the top money winners in the men's and

women's pro brackets.

"We wanted to showcase the cream of the racquetball world," said Mike. "And we wanted to do it up right."

Recognizing the amateurs as well as the professionals, Hart decided to hold a parallel tournament for men's A and B, and women's A and B alongside the pros.

The entire format has been a huge success. Professional players the last four months have been competing with one eye on Peoria, jockeying for position, to make that coveted top eight or 12.

An extra incentive was first round byes going to the top four men players, ensuring them of a minimum of \$400 in prize money.

"The competition all season and especially the Aurora, Milwaukee and Buffalo tournaments was exceptional," said Joe Ardito, N.R.C. National Commissioner. "Everybody realized the importance of qualifying for Peoria."

Further importance was placed on the Tournament of Champions results when the N.R.C. announced that seeding in the National Championships would be based on prize money earnings.

"The Peoria concept is a good one," said Ardito, "because it keeps all the players pushing as hard as they can at all times."

The Courtside Tournament of Champions is exactly that.

New USRA Accidental Death Insurance Plan

In the next five minutes, someone will be killed in an accident. In fact, accidents rank as the leading cause of death up to age 45 and third as the cause of death between the ages of 45 and 65. In addition, accidents disable some 200 persons every 10 minutes.

In past years, few Americans have made an effort to insure themselves for accidental death or accidental dismemberment—even though the risks are high. The USRA recognized the need for this type of insurance and developed group accidental death and dismemberment coverages available at extremely reasonable premium rates.

The United States Racquetball Association now

sponsors a new Group Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Plan. This \$150,000 coverage plan is available as a membership benefit to USRA members, their spouses and dependent children.

This Accidental Death and Dismemberment protection is 24 hour, worldwide accident coverage for the entire family.

A USRA member under age 70 may choose from three principal sum benefit plans—\$150,000 or \$100,000 or \$50,000. In other words, if an insured member dies in a commercial airline crash, when driving an automobile, in a fall, in a pedestrian accident or in almost any type of accident, the policy benefi-

cary receives the full principal sum amount.

This type of accidental death coverage means a member can provide far higher family life insurance benefits than is probably affordable under conventional life insurance policies. High death benefits become extremely important to a family when they suddenly lose their breadwinner. In essence, this new USRA plan reduces the "financial shock" of sudden death.

In addition, a USRA member may insure his or her spouse under age 70 and all unmarried, dependent children under age 19 (23 if a full-time student) for a portion of the principal sum. These benefits would help soften the

blow of sudden family tragedy.

The USRA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Plan also provides up to \$150,000 for various types of accidental dismemberments. Benefits are paid on a sliding scale which depends upon the severity of the dismemberment. Again, a member may also insure spouse and children for this coverage.

Members will receive complete information and enrollment forms through the mail, or they may write the Insurance Administrator for details: Albert H. Wohlers & Co., USRA GROUP INSURANCE PLANS, 720 Garden Street, Park Ridge, Illinois, 60068.

Chuck Sheftel Named Director of Racquetball For Court House Organization

By John Wineman

Chuck Sheftel, Head Pro at Mid-Town Court House, 1235 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, has been named Director of Racquetball for the Court House Sports Club, Inc., a group of five racquetball/handball clubs in the Chicago area.

Sheftel, whose teaching background includes tennis and racquetball instruction to players of all ages and all levels of ability, will coordinate the interclub activities between the five area clubs, and also structure and design an extensive program of instructional group and individual lesson plans.

According to Sheftel, the newness of the sport and

its rapid growth have caused it to grow up without the in-depth instructional background of a sport like tennis, and that now, with racquetball entering its "adolescence," it's the best time to devise a mature lesson methodology.

He also says that because the sport is easy to learn, oftentimes players are way into it with bad habits before they even think about instruction, and by that time it's harder to change.

"A few hints by reputable professionals who have been playing and teaching for years can add a lot more fun to a racquetball game, and players at all levels can benefit from lessons."



Chuck Sheftel

In order to keep up his expertise in tennis, where he is a USPTA professional, Sheftel will supplement his racquetball duties by teaching tennis at the Mid-Town Tennis Club, 2020 W. Fullerton, Chicago.

Sheftel was born and raised in Highland Park, Illinois having graduated from Highland Park High School in 1965 and from the University of Illinois in 1969.

Win-at-all-costs: is it worth it?

Jan Thiessan

Insulting the referee, endangering one's opponent, screaming "hinder" instead of "nice shot."

It's called win-at-all-costs, and there's too damn much of that philosophy in racquetball.

Blaming your failures on a "blind" referee is childish. It's worthy of a 4-year-old to explain a loss by saying, "I had a bad referee."

On a college basketball telecast recently, the referee signaled a turnover when a player stepped on the base line. The coach raced onto the court, shouting at the official, claiming his man hadn't stepped on the line at all.

The ensuing argument resulted in the coach's ejection from the gym.

The point is: So what if the call was wrong? It came with about 10 minutes left to go in the game, and with the loud-mouthed coach's team ahead by eight points.

If his team had lost, would it have been because of that call?

Was it worth being kicked out of the game? More importantly, was it worth the coach's making a fool of himself?

When you scream at a racquetball referee, do your friends hang their heads in shame? Take a good look—you may be surprised at how much you embarrass not only yourself.

Racquetball is a game, right? Most of us don't make any money at it. And even if we all were

pros, would it be worth a \$1,500 first prize if you had injured your opponent with overly aggressive play?

At two tournaments in Arizona in the last year, I've seen players hit with racquets. Both incidents were unnecessary. There was plenty of time to hold the swing.

But would the players take a hinder? Would they forfeit a set-up? No!

So one man had the back of his head split open and another nearly had his knee torn off.

It takes 42 points to win a match. Is one point worth it?

Is victory worth cheating? That's exactly what you do when you claim "contact" or

"screen" on a ball that was passing you, out of reach.

Sure, you may con the referee, and you may be granted a replay by your opponent at the club. But you will have lost at least one friend.

Or maybe you're the type who invents leg cramps and takes an "injury" time-out when your opponent is just whipping the you-know-what out of you. Did that illegal rest allow you to come back and win? Proud of that???

So think about it. If you still want to win at all costs, good luck finding a game!

Classified

Classified Ads Available

With the advent of the new *National Racquetball Extra!!* section of *National Racquetball* magazine, we can now offer our readers an even greater variety of information and services.

Among these are our new classified advertising section, for people looking for ideas, information, investors, pros, managers or any other needed services within our sport. Additionally, those persons seeking positions are welcome to advertise.

Rates for classified ads are \$50 per column inch (\$50 minimum). Payment must accompany order.

Send classified ads to: Print Media Services, 222 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, Illinois 60068.

Other new sections include *Sound Off!* where readers can verbalize in detail their opinions of specific racquetball subjects; *Book Review* to keep the reader informed of new information on racquetball; and who's doing what in court clubs, including pros, managers and owners.

We hope you'll like this addition to *National Racquetball*, as we continue to expand our coverage of our booming world.

Racquetball Pro Wanted
— Male or Female Personality and creativity more important than skill. Unlimited freedom with interhouse programs. 10 courts, 2 with full glass plus 400 seat exhibition. South Suburban Chicago area. Work within the scope of tennis and racquetball. Salary commensurate with ability. Write Dept. No. 100, National Racquetball, 4101 Dempster St., Skokie, IL 60076.

Research Results

National Racquetball magazine has received many requests for the compiled results of our research questionnaire published in the January, 1976 issue. Our staff is currently compiling the results of the research form and we are still receiving additional replies. The final information will be published in the July issue.

New Keeley Book gets Rave Reviews

By Charlie Brumfield

Racquetballer-author, Steve Keeley, has combined his court savvy and writing skills to come up with a long-awaited instructional book. *Complete Book of Racquetball* claims to have something for all court dwellers. As the preface decrees, "This textbook is designed for every racquetball player, from the greenhorn beginner to the seasoned veteran. No aspiring player is immune from its instructional benefits." In addition, the work should prove invaluable in high school and college physical education classes.

The author has put nine years of amateur and professional racquetball and paddleball experience, as well as four years of instructional teaching, into detailed written form. Indeed, Keeley's credentials are undeniable. He is a four time National Singles Paddleball Champion and a two time National Singles Racquetball Runner-Up. More significantly, as a racquetball instructor, he is perhaps the most experienced individual in the country, having conducted dozens of clinics and camps and having given thousands of private lessons.

The book is divided into three parts. Part One is "Racquetball Before Entering The Court." It offers a brief history of the game, a complete run-down on racquetball equipment (from racquets to wristbands), and a synopsis of the basic rules and strategies in-

involved in the sport. Part Two considers the fundamental racquetball skills, including the strokes (and respective grips), service and service returns, backwall play, defensive shots (ceiling ball, Z-ball, around-the-wall ball), and other play-making facets of the volley. Part Two is the meat of the book, obviously, and each aspect is extremely detailed in word, picture, and diagram. Part Three includes the official rules and an extensive glossary of racquetball terms.

This instructional text is different from most other how-to-do teaching manuals because of the author's literary style. As many *National Racquetball* readers know from following his instructional articles of recent years, Keeley inserts humor and brief personal glimpses into his own past to emphasize certain points. Nevertheless, this "wetting down" of dry reading material is delightfully doctored without sacrificing logic or clarity.

This does not mean the book is without more serious, technical enumeration. This is an enjoyable way to learn to play because of the literary style, but it is much more. Over one-third of the book is pictures and diagrams. The photographs alone, many of them shot sequence photos, make the book a splendid pictorial record of proper racquet swing-work. Consider just the basic forehand stroke:

Chapter Four displays the movement via three different angles in four, five and six sequence photos. Too, there is a plentiful sprinkling of tournament action shots of top-flight players such as myself, Steve Serot, Bill Schmidtke, Steve Strandemo, and other supereminents which provide real-to-life portrayals of the various shots and strategies being highlighted. Besides the photographs, there are explanatory diagrams and figures with accompanying captions. For example, under the section dealing with the low drive serve to the backhand, there are three diagrams: one shows the front wall bullseye, another the three possible flight paths of the serve, and yet another, the left rear corner target area. The diagrams are one or three dimensional depending on the specific court concept being schematically represented.

There are two fringe benefits to all this. Each instructional chapter is preceded by an outline and concluded by a series of practice drills. The opening summary is a comprehensive quick-glance at the important points which are to follow. Each of these outlines keeps the chapter's in-depth discourses in perspective and serve as an ideal ready-reference after one has completed the book. Then, with practice drills punctuating each chapter's parting words, the reader is encouraged to put the

discussed concepts and movements into practice through solo drilling. There are also practice routines explained and diagrammed for two players; the double around-the-ball exercise is one of the many innovative duo drills presented.

In *Complete Book of Racquetball*, one of the game's top players and authors teaches "that wierd game where two dudes in underwear take turns swatty a doggy ball with a sawed-off tennis racquet within a 20' x 20' x 40' sweatbox." With 288 pages of text, over 300 photographs, and 75 diagrams, this instructional textbook is a must for all levels of players, YMCA's, JCCA's, court clubs, and universities.

Editor's Note:

The book may be obtained at bookstores beginning May, 1976, or by writing DBI Books, 540 Frontage Road, Northfield, Illinois 60093. DBI, Inc., formally known as Digest Books, Inc., is widely known for its sports publications. The DBI publishers will put out 50,000 copies of *Complete Book of Racquetball* with the first printing. The anticipated market includes educational institution physical education departments, mass market, and racquetball clubs and institutions.

Racquetball World Mourns Passing of Theodore Tarantula

By Steve Keeley

(Note: The following obituary is in tribute to Steve Keeley's pet tarantula. Keeley had three of the spiders over the past winter (see interview, January *National Racquetball*), and Theodore was the last to succumb,—as the author puts it, "to an uncommon terminal illness.")

Theodore Tarantula, beloved pet of Steve Keeley, passed away on the afternoon of March 2, 1976, at Mr. Keeley's San Diego residence. The deceased spider lived at said residence the final few months of his six year life. Prior to coming under the care of Mr. Keeley, he inhabited a hole in the ground in the Black Mountains, California. Mr. Theodore has no known living relatives.

The California native arachnid will long be remembered for his aesthetic contribution to the environment of the Charles Drake home, with whom Mr. Keeley presently dwells. Theodore's unselfish lifestyle and viceless pursuit of wholesome eight-legged happiness led many of his closer acquaintances to fondly call him "Theological Theo."

Theodore's brief career as a pet was distinguished. Though confined during his dying days to a small, glass cubical, the selfless spider performed within his simple God-given niche with exemplary taste:

he demanded no more than one large cricket per week; he observed immaculate personal habits; and he refused, although entirely capable, to startle skittish onlookers with any fierce or sudden movements.

The etiology of Mr. Theodore's protracted illness is unknown, pending autopsy. The spider went off food for one month and subsequently dwindled to a multi-legged, furry exoskeleton. Close friends hint the cause of death may have been a broken heart, evidence of this surfaced when the coroner's office reported that Theodore initially fell ill upon the prolonged absence of Mr. Keeley,—who later claimed to be at two east coast professional racquetball tour-

naments, his present occupation.

Mr. Keeley, also a veterinarian by degree, was at Theodore's cageside as his pet faltered, rolled over, gave a leggy kick and fanged a final farewell gasp. Mr. Keeley is reputed to have remarked, "There goes one damn, nice spider."

Belated burial ceremonies for Theodore Tarantula will be conducted following the championship match of the National Racquetball Championships at the Atlas Health Club in San Diego, June 19. As Theodore lingered languidly during his last few days in a small, glass cage, he requested final mass in a large, glass court. Out of respect to this terminal wish, Keeley has

vowed to "perform in the early tournament rounds to the utmost of my ability, to participate in the racquetball finals on June 19, and to afterwards dedicate the championship game ball to the memory of Theo." The sacred sphere shall mark the spider's grave site.

Mr. Keeley has asked that mourners observe a little common decency: "Remember Theodore as one big, happy, hairy tarantula ready to give a hand to eight people at once. He asked for little; he gave a lot." Please send flowers and/or monetary sentiments to The Home for Wayward Tarantulas, % Leach Industries, San Diego.

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The History of Racquetball

SERIES/Part 5

This is the fifth and final of a series in *National Racquetball* magazine on the history of racquetball. The work of Mr. Fancher is from his thesis "A History of Racquetball," written in partial fulfillment for a Master of Science degree in physical education at the University of Wisconsin. Any comments, additions or opinions regarding this paper should be addressed to Mr. Terry Fancher, Skokie Court House, 3710 Touhy Ave., Skokie, Illinois 60076, where he recently accepted the club's teaching position.

Organization and Leadership

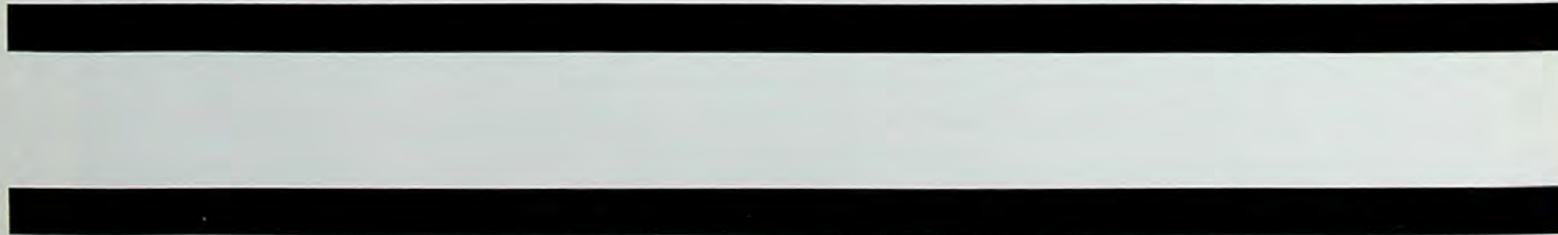
In the early organization of the IRA, authority was primarily vested in the USHA president and executive secretary and the IRA national commissioner. As the organization grew larger, a need for a board of directors, a national executive coordinator, as well as other offices, became apparent. Racquetball and the IRA had adapted to the early problems of organization and leadership in the sport, largely through the effort of the USHA, which provided a functional system for promotion of

the game and a magazine for dissemination of news.

Organizing racquetball was similar in many ways to structuring handball. Tournaments, age group divisions, and regional tournaments were patterned after successful handball programs. The USHA had been dealing with related problems since breaking away from the Amateur Athletic Union about 1950, and this experience surely added stability to the racquetball enterprise. Also, since the courts and facilities used for the game were identical, promotion of racquetball was made in conjunction with handball.

The USHA, however, was previously dedicated to handball, and its true allegiance was to that game. During each of the annual IRA National Championships, a board of directors meeting continued to be held to bring up new ideas and suggestions for improvement of the game and the organizational structure.

The Third Annual International Tournament was conducted in Salt Lake City, Utah, at the Deseret Gymnasium in 1971. In his president's address at the tournament banquet, Kendler emphasized the future of racquetball, indicating that



participation by the whole family, including women, should lead to more players and greatly increase IRA membership. Kendler reiterated the progress that had been made in promoting handball as an Olympic sport and that the current success caused him to be enthusiastic for the same outcome for racquetball. The IRA President described how television should provide excellent exposure for the game and play in the glass court allowed viewers to be better able to follow the ball.

Gathering from all across America, the directors of the IRA finally came together for their first official meeting since the previous year to sit down and put their organization in order and exchange ideas. This important meeting took place at the Court House Handball-Racquetball Club in Minneapolis, Minnesota, after the National Invitational Singles in January of 1973.

Board of Directors—April, 1973

At the April, 1973 International Tournament in St. Louis, Kendler resigned as President of the International Racquetball Association.

The Board paid tribute to past president Kendler by expressing dismay for the loss of Kendler's leadership and unequalled experience for the future of racquetball. In the past Kendler's name had been synonymous with the sports of racquetball and handball. The Board expressed a debt of gratitude to the man who

had almost singlehandedly surfaced two formerly obscure sports into national recognition. Kendler's devotion, contribution and unselfish service was recognized.

Kendler was a diversified man and an extremely successful businessman who had broken ties with the Amateur Athletic Union nearly a quarter of a century before to form the United States Handball Association, and most of the top players of the game had followed him; the USHA was unrivaled as the major handball organization following the split with the AAU. Many factors were probably involved with Kendler's resignation from the IRA. Kendler had preferred to oversee the organization in his own manner and this created friction between himself and the board of directors. Probably his lifetime love for handball caused some members to question whether or not racquetball was being given equal attention. Regardless of the reasons involved, under Kendler's tenure the IRA had been immensely successful. Also, Kendler initially had been asked in 1968 to promote the new game and had agreed to do so in the face of some opposition from handball players. His actions had taken foresight and the courage of conviction.

Game Changes

Equipment

Innovations in equipment were popular in the early 1970s. Equipment manufacturers realized

a new market with the upsurge in racquetball play and made vast production investments. In racquet development there had been a large field of improvement. Originally, players used wooden framed racquets which were bulky, heavy, and could lead to sore arms and more severe injuries than the newer conventional racquets. The old racquets with their heaviness and rigid frame allowed no real "sweet spot" on the racquet. This meant that if one did not strike the ball on the center of the strung area and happened to hit the edge of the frame the ball caromed off to the side. The frame of the newer models was practically flush with the strings and prevented this occurrence.

With the introduction of aluminum racquets, first Sportcraft, then Ektelon, and the beginning of fiberglass or plastic mixed with fiberglass, mainly with Leach Industries, the racquets began to be customized to the sport. Before, the wooden racquets were more of a cut-down version of a tennis racket which was the idea that most manufacturers went by in production. The wooden racquet was more cumbersome and was made with varying degrees of quality. With the advent of racquet improvement, the frames became lighter and were easier to swing, the strings used for racquets were of a better quality, and were strung looser than before. This afforded more control for the livelier ball

which did not require as much power to stroke firmly. Through this type of development, both Leach and Ektelon were instrumental in upgrading the sport as far as racquet development.

In 1971, the first model in the line of Ektelon racquets was introduced, with the Bud Muehleisen Autograph model as the prototype. It consisted of a *"durable aluminum alloy frame and rubberized grip combined with light weight and ideal balance for complete hitting response."* A tough bumper inserted around the racquet head provided cushioned protection for walls and floor. The racquet was tested by various caliber players for a year and a half and became available for immediate delivery.

One racquet equipment company added new dimension to its advertising and a wider variety to its racquet inventory in 1972 with Leach Industries, Leach Racquet Division, advertising in the August edition of *Handball* magazine. Leach used top racquetball players to subsidize their equipment advertisements. Leach racquets were structured out of fiberglass or carbon and came in a wide variety of weights, grips, styles, and stressed that their racquets provided more flexibility and "feel" to put more energy on the ball for stronger shots.

In response to the question of how equipment had influenced racquetball, Kendler stated that the

equipment had actually made the game, specifically the ball. Racquetball, like handball, succeeded because in the development of the racquetball the players demanded that the ball be speeded up. A lively ball allowed maximum use of all four walls as well as enabling players to execute the ceiling shot in which the ball must be pressurized enough to carry deep into the back court after being struck. This caused the opponent to relinquish commanding center court position by racing to the back wall to retrieve this high shot rebounding from the ceiling. However, the lively ball created difficulties because the more the ball was pressurized, the more fragile it became. Seamco makes the official racquetball and it is probably the finest on the market presently. A green ball is also marketed by Seamco. This was done to alleviate the visual problems caused by playing in glass courts where the black ball sometimes became difficult to see. Also, a black ball is not as readily visible on television as the colored ball. Breakage problems are now behind them.

In summary, the speed of the ball has changed the type of play completely. The type of court with the glass walls changed the type of play also. The color of the ball made its marketability greater. Changes in the equipment have had a profound effect on the game.

Opposition to Racquetball by Handball Players

The hostility between handball and racquetball players continued to be a problem in some areas, especially in California. The dispute was described as a "range war" with the handball players still defending their courts from the invasion of a new breed, the racquetball players. However, in some areas the handball advocates did cooperate, for instance, at the Hollywood, California, YMCA where racquetball had been played since 1949. Momentum for the game really began in 1968 with the formation of the IRA and the use of newer and better equipment. Since that time racquetball players have literally filled the courts around the country, and several conflicts between handball and racquetball players emerged.

Court Space Problems

In 1968 in San Diego County few people were playing racquetball; court owners in recent years have estimated that 10,000 players were in a rivalry for space and there were only about 100 courts available. The Midwest, which was always an area which supported handball, became a predominately racquetball "hotbed" and accounted for a great majority of play in courts where both sports could be played.

Thomas Stattler, a professor of physical education at the University

of Illinois, studied the popularity of racquetball in various sections of the country. Stattler stated that racquetball was much more popular than handball in most areas. Equipment companies probably agreed. Leach Industries of San Diego in 1972 produced 15,000 racquetball racquets and they began to produce that many each month in the following months. Seamco produced 84,000 balls in 1969 and they soon began to produce around two million a year.

Rivalry Continued

As the rise of racquetball continued, animosity between its supporters and handball players grew prior to the formation of the IRA, when players convinced Kendler to head their association in 1968. Then the opposition to racquetball lessened somewhat, though Kendler's position to allow the racquetball players to have equal status with handball players created a wave of protests for a while. Racquetballers at exhibitions at court clubs often received jeers, and at times employees who were concerned about the wishes of handball playing members were forced to ask racquetball players to leave.

The force created by the continued popularity of racquetball broke down many of the early obstacles presented by handball, although some clubs continued to disallow the sport or restrict its play to certain hours. The Hollywood

YMCA was presented a petition signed by 400 handball players who stated that they would stop their membership if they were forced to share courts with racquetballers. Many clubs like the Encino Health Club actually lost members as a result of such opposition.

Kendler was of the opinion in 1974 that the opposition to racquetball from handball players had subsided 100% from the late 1960s. In past years there was an enormous boom in court clubs all over the United States that was beyond anything imagined in the early years of the game. Kendler related that any new innovation in the USHA required a convincing argument to persuade the membership. A trial run was suggested to indicate proof of the benefits of racquetball over a period of time. This was precisely what had resulted with racquetball.

Mort Leve, USHA executive secretary, was in general agreement with Kendler and indicated that the handball opposition had eased over the past years. Many handball players discovered that they could enjoy both games, and if no handball partner was available they could usually find someone with whom to play racquetball. Involvement of wives and girlfriends in the game created a co-existence with women also. There were, however, a few handball players who still treated racquetball as a stepchild and would not change their staunch opposition to the new game.

Epilogue

The sport of racquetball was developed through the diligent efforts of several individuals, but it was the combined energy of the enthusiastic and interested participants—men, women and even children—that made it the successful game that it is today. It is apparently the ease with which the elementary phases of the game are learned that ensures further participation for the beginning player. Many games attract eager-minded followers, but interest subsides when it is discovered that a game is not always as easy as it appears. However, with racquetball, players usually find some degree of success on their first try and further progress is limited only by the time available to play the game, along with inherent physical skill and ability. A player may progress up to the highest level of competition on the national level or may choose to just have enjoyable physical activity with a partner, as is generally the case. Racquetball is a lifetime sport that provides stimulating physical exertion in a brief period of time, but the most important point to emphasize is that it is *fun*.

As a product of hundreds of years of evolution of other racquet sports, racquetball has progressed so rapidly that it is now a game of sophisticated modern equipment. In the last few years, the ball used for the game has changed from a rubber child's ball into a highly compressed version which is the result of constant industrial

research and development seeking to perfect its playability. Racquets have evolved from bulky wooden frames to light weight plastics derived from research in the space program, along with other combinations of metals, ensuring reliable playing dependability. Racquetball courts, being identical to handball courts, became the recipient of many years of court improvement pioneered by handball, such as glass sidewalls or backwalls for better viewing, superior floor and wall textures and improved court lighting. This synthesis of the various aspects of the game, along with the design and construction of court clubs across the country to showcase facilities and top players, has aided in making racquetball an almost instant success story.

Racquetball was established as a separate entity when the IRA began publication of its own magazine apart from the game of handball. This was the turning point that proved that the game could stand on its own merits with its own membership to support it. Along with its own magazine and the royalties accrued from the sale of official IRA products, the financial base for the continuing success of racquetball was secured.

Kendler severed relations with the IRA in 1973 and formed a rival organization, the National Racquetball Club (NRC) which sponsors a professional tour for

top-ranked racquetball players. Included in the professional tour is an amateur open tournament at each stop. In conjunction with this idea, the NRC formed the United States Racquetball Association (USRA) as the amateur organization of the NRC.

The participation of women has had a marked effect on racquetball. The latest milestone was the appointment of Kathy Williams as the first female teaching pro and manager of a new racquetball center in the Detroit, Michigan area. As a fulltime salaried employee, Ms. Williams became the first woman to gain professional status in racquetball. To accept her new position she gave up a faculty position in the physical education department at Oakland University.

Racquetball has made remarkable achievements for a new sport. It will be interesting to see just what progress the sport will make; it is hoped that the worthy examples and achievements made by the founders and leaders of the game of racquetball will be followed in future years. The ingenuity and determination of these men is worthy of admiration.

As the sport of racquetball progresses, the need for future study is recommended in several

areas. The contribution that women continue to make to the sport is a topic which should be explored; the influence of women is becoming more and more apparent. Another matter which will need to be researched is the various personality types among players of the game; what are the reasons that some young men have sacrificed lucrative careers to pursue relatively meager monetary winnings on the professional racquetball tour? The continued evolution of equipment is a topic which will also need to be investigated. In the relatively short time span that the game has existed, equipment changes have been of major importance; later evaluations will be required. To increase and further the little existing knowledge of the sport of racquetball, these areas are recommended for future analysis and consideration.

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Kathy Williams

Leve: How would you characterize your style of play?

Williams: I like to shoot a lot. I don't like to play defense, I don't like to play long, ceiling ball rallies. I guess I learned that style from learning paddleball from the Michigan State guys. I've just continued that offensive style and been pretty successful being a shooter. When I get into a little trouble that's when I get the big choke on and lose. But when I'm shooting well,—that's the style I like to play.

Leve: Can you play defensively?

Williams: I feel I can do it. I feel I can hit a ceiling ball just as well as anybody else. But I do get bored with it. It can go on and on, and then just a silly, little mistake can hurt you. I'm not a patient player,—I'd rather go out there hit the ball hard, kill it and get a good workout. I usually have trouble against patient players so I try and initiate the play, like I did in Aurora. I try and give my opponent a seemingly good opportunity to shoot and then cover or re-kill.

Leve: You must, then, have great confidence in your anticipation and coverage abilities.

Williams: Sometimes I do. In certain tournaments you feel that everything is going just right. You're on top of every situation. But other tournaments I feel slow and sluggish. It could be a motivation problem. At times like that, it doesn't matter what I do. I just don't feel like I'm in the game. Whether I go to the ceiling or shoot the ball it doesn't matter,—I'm just not playing well. Unfortunately, if I start out that way, I usually continue.

That's probably my biggest problem. I don't always have a lot of confidence in my own game. If things aren't going real well, they seem to continue that way.

Leve: Isn't that somewhat characteristic of a shooter?

Williams: Definitely. If you're a pure shooter and are not playing well, you

NATIONAL RACQUETBALL INTERVIEW

Twenty-eight year old Kathy Williams has a lot of firsts in racquetball. She has won more women's pro tournaments than anybody else; she was the first woman ever hired to manage a court club; and she is the first woman to sign an all-encompassing contract with a major racquetball manufacturer.

Married for six years, this Pontiac, Michigan native is the only athlete in a family which includes three other sisters. She did her collegiate undergraduate studies at Central Michigan University and the University of Colorado, and received her masters degree in physical education (exercise physiology) from Michigan State.

It was at MSU that she learned paddleball, met up with Steve Keeley, Dan Alder and other paddleball enthusiasts and followed the trend to racquetball a few years later. After quickly picking up paddleball she went on to win numerous titles, including the national championship.

Although never quite that successful in racquetball competition, she has placed as high as third in the nationals, and continues to work toward that elusive national title.

Her game is marked by tremendous strength and power and when she's playing well, her kill shots are bottom board. Her form and technique are excellent, making her in high demand as an instructor, which she does part time.

For a thought provoking interview on the game, her game, and the women's game, read on. The interview was conducted by National Racquetball editor Chuck Leve.

have nothing to fall back on. I guess it's hard to change. Either you're going to be an aggressive shooter and play close, or lay back and wait for your opponent to make a mistake. I've tried to play defensively, but it's rough.

Another thing, I play a lot of men around here, mainly because there aren't a lot of women to practice with. I think if I played more women so I could play that type of ball, then I'd probably become more patient. But against men, they get to those ceiling balls faster, they take more chances and they're stronger. So, it's better for me to go for the winner and try and get the rally over with. I just can't continue a ceiling ball rally with a six foot tall guy.

Leve: *As I recall you and Jan Campbell were the first women to "hit the ball like a man," i.e., correctly. Would you agree to that?*

Williams: I think Campbell hits well, and I think Pasternak does too. Pasternak probably was hitting correctly before any of us. When I first saw Pasternak, I was really impressed with the way she played. They were the first two and then I came along, and now there are quite a few.

Leve: *What is it about Peggy Steding that puts her above all the other women?*

Williams: I think it all started out when she beat Campbell in the '73 Nationals, her first national tournament. I, like so many others, thought Campbell was the one to beat, all the way through. When Peggy beat her it was amazing.

She takes a lot of balls out of the air, keeps you off guard a lot. I don't think she hits a lot of good shots, but she takes you by surprise. Plus she has such a good reputation that it's easy to get psyched out against her.

I've only played her twice in my life. The first time I was scared to death. I didn't do very well either time. The very first time it was like I was always on the defensive, I didn't know what to do, I rushed everything. So, the next time we played I decided I was going to take my time and slow things down. If you let her play her pace it goes from 0-0 and two minutes

later it's 12-0. She just gets up there, plays the ball fast, and it's over before you know it.

The second time I just clutched again. I rushed my shots again, I expected her to get everything. I think the more you play her, the better you're going to do. But I get such little opportunity to play the top women.

Leve: *How about playing Pasternak? You seem to match up pretty well against her.*

Williams: The first time, I did terribly. That was in San Diego two years ago. I was playing the best racquetball of my life, I thought, but I lost to Pasternak in three. They were three real close games, 18-all in the third.

The second time was in Aurora, and everything seemed to work out just great there. I had a lot of confidence, I was just waiting for anybody to shoot the ball, to do anything they wanted. I felt I could get anything or shoot anything. It's a strange feeling to feel that way throughout a tournament. I knew I was going to beat her, even after we got out on the court and started playing.

Leve: *Would you say, then, that all of the top women players can beat any of the others and that it is virtually all mental as to who tops who on a given day?*

Williams: Yes, definitely.

Leve: *How would you go about getting yourself in the correct frame of mind?*

Williams: If I could do that I'd be up there at the very top. I don't know. I've been searching for that answer for a very long time. I wish I could tell you.

I guess it's the ability to just blank out everything else in your mind. When I'm not playing well, I'm thinking about everything else,—who's up there in the crowd watching, what I'm going to be doing afterwards, and so forth. When I played in Aurora it was different. My opponents, no matter who they were, just seemed like somebody out there. It didn't matter who it was, I was in control. Confidence and concentration.

Leve: *How has women's racquetball changed since you've been playing?*

Williams: I really don't think it's changed that much. I do think that there's a lot more people now who are able to execute all the shots better. When I first started, there just weren't that many women around. Now there are more women who know the correct way to play,—they play just about the same, there are just more of them. It hasn't really changed that drastically, except they're better players.

Leve: *How do you view the future of women's pro racquetball?*

Williams: Well, if it continues the way it is, I don't think it has a very bright future. It's good when you can get all the players together, but it's absolutely financially impossible for all the good players to make all the major tournaments. You're lucky if you get a good semi-finals on, sometimes you're lucky if you even get a good finals.

I don't like to look a gift horse in the mouth, because we are getting some money. I don't think racquetball owes us anything. Maybe it lies in the sponsors,—if they would recognize that women are of value. You'll have a good tournament if you get all the top women together.

It's very difficult for the women. That's why I missed some of the tournaments this season. I just could never afford to go west to compete in them,—and I've been playing for five years. And in that time I've only played Janell (Marriott) once, and Jan (Campbell) twice, and Peg (Steding) twice and well, you just can't do it.

It's hard to go all the way to Tucson and pay \$250 for the air fare and know that even if you reach the semi's you'll only get \$50. I don't think the women are out for the money. They just enjoy playing. It's just financially impossible for them to do it.

Last year I made my expenses. I broke even. That's great, and I wouldn't even mind giving a little. My expenses for the year came to about \$1,500 and I couldn't have done it without the prize money. I think most people would be satisfied to break even.

Leve: *Has it bothered you that*

people say you never win the big ones?

Williams: I guess it did at first. It doesn't any more. When I first started I really wanted to be the national champion, but I'm not obsessed with that any more.

I really enjoy playing, ever since my paddleball days, and that's the attitude I've tried to maintain. I don't get upset or mad when I lose and I'd rather have it be that way.

I think the big money really changes people. I can see it in the men already.

Leve: *What changes have you noticed in the men?*

Williams: There's a lot more squabbling and bickering. There are some matches I really enjoy watching and then there are others I don't care for. I guess they're crowd pleasers, I don't know. In Tucson, for example, Bledsoe and McCoy had just a super racquetball performance,—no bickering, no hassling, no arguing with the referee,—just a good, well played match. The next match up were two other guys and you knew even before they started that they'd be yelling at each other and arguing with the ref and that kind of stuff.

Leve: *What would you have to do to win the national title this year?*

Williams: I'm going to have to learn to concentrate better. Maybe I don't want it badly enough, I think about that a lot. But I know I can hit the ball as hard as anyone else and that I've got the shots. I know I'm not very patient. Also, these people I don't play very much still scare me, I'm in awe a little, I guess. I don't think anyone's in awe of me, but I am of some of the other women. I've just got to get my confidence and concentration together.

Leve: *How did you get started in racquetball?*

Williams: I went to Michigan State University to grad school in 1971 and that's where I started playing paddleball. At that time guys like Keeley, Dan Alder, Ray Bayer were at Michigan State playing paddleball,—so I joined in.

I played every day and against super people all the time, all men. When I left, I taught at Oakland University, Michigan for three years. When I first

went to Oakland Keeley had already gone to San Diego and he sent me two racquets. He sent me a letter and said start playing, that in a couple of years this was going to be the thing. So for a year, I just went down on the courts and played. Steve kept me informed as to what was going on and then I went to the regional tournament one year. I entered and that's how it all started.

Leve: *How much does playing men help your game? Would you encourage up-and-coming women to play men?*

Williams: I'd encourage them to play men, yes, but I'd also encourage them to play the top women, too. You've gotta do both.

Leve: *Some people say that if you play men too much, you get used to the pace and style of men, making the transition to women's play very difficult. Is this accurate?*

Williams: No, I don't think so. The top women play a lot like the men I play. There's not that much difference. I don't play that many really super men, great ones. But I find that of the men I do play, many of the top women have better shots, although they may not be as quick.

Leve: *What's your reaction to the tie-breaker?*

Williams: I don't know, I haven't played one yet. I've heard a lot of people say they like it and that it's more exciting to watch.

Leve: *It was somewhat of a milestone when you were hired as the first female court club manager. How did all that come about?*

Williams: Well, when the first court club came about in the Detroit area, I was the only racquetball player around here who anybody had ever heard of. The owners were looking for somebody who knew something about racquetball. They didn't know anything. They were builders, not players. So they heard I knew something about lessons and running a pro shop and they found me.

Leve: *Why did you quit the club managerial business?*

Williams: I realized after a while that it wasn't the type of job I really wanted. I wasn't really suited for it and I didn't really enjoy it.

Leve: *What was it that you didn't like?*

Williams: I didn't like all the time I had to spend at the club, and there was a lack of communications.

Leve: *The time element would lead me to believe you wouldn't re-enter club work, but you have. Why?*

Williams: I'm just working part time now. I'm just teaching lessons, not in management at all. I really like it a lot more. When you're managing you have a great deal of responsibility. The club was open from 5:30 a.m. to midnight and all the hours were your responsibility. When I went away to tournaments I felt I was still responsible, which I was. If something went wrong it still came back to me. I could never get away from it, I could never rest.

Now, all I do is teach lessons and play racquetball, and I enjoy it a lot more. I've always enjoyed teaching.

Leve: *You do seem comfortable in a lessons situation. Do you think this has a lot to do with your background?*

Williams: I think so. I got a degree in teaching, and I taught at Oakland. It's what I like doing.

Leve: *Were you ever active in any other competitive sports?*

Williams: Probably the biggest one was swimming. I was a competitive swimmer for 10 years. When I was at Central Michigan University I played on the basketball team that went to the national tournament; I've played tennis and softball and our teams were state champs.

I pick up things easily, especially team sports. Swimming was the only other individual activity.

Leve: *Do you come from an athletic family?*

Williams: No, not at all. I've got three sisters and none of them are involved in athletics like I am. My parents are not athletic. My dad doesn't even golf.

Leve: *How did you first get involved in sports, then?*



Williams: I don't know. You pursue the things you're good at, and I always picked up sports easily.

Leve: *Would you classify yourself as a tomboy when you were a kid?*

Williams: I guess I would. I lived out in the country, had a couple of horses, a bunch of animals and enjoyed that type of life.

Leve: *How can you afford to work only part time now?*

Williams: Well, I don't have to support my husband any more. He's been in medical school the last four years and I've always had to earn enough for us to live on, although he worked part time along the way. Now that he's done, it's taken a lot of pressure off me. I don't have to work if I don't want to. But I'm so used to doing something, I don't think I could handle just sitting around.

Leve: *How does he react to your going all over the country to racquetball tournaments?*

Williams: People ask me that a lot. "How can your husband let you do all this?" We have a really good relationship that way. He's been so busy the last five years and I've either been sitting home or working. He realizes that there are things in my life that I enjoy doing that he doesn't like and there are things he likes that I don't. Just because some of our interests are not mutual doesn't mean we shouldn't pursue them. He's glad that I have racquetball as an outlet. He just wishes he could come to a tournament and watch me.

Leve: *Does he play racquetball?*

Williams: Dennis taught me how to play paddleball. He was a tennis player, but then he got so busy that he quit playing racquetball. He still plays some tennis and golf and I don't do either. I'm glad that he does.

Leve: *How long have you been married?*

Williams: It will be six years in September.

Leve: *Are the rumors I hear about the Williams' expanding their family true?*

Williams: No comment.

Leve: *Do you have a training program to stay in shape or prepare for tournaments?*

Williams: No. It's all based on how interested I am at the time. Right now I'm really trying to practice a lot to get ready for the nationals. I really sluffed off a lot the year I was managing. I just couldn't get down there to practice. It's so different when you're working a club. Being there all day long takes the thrill out of it. I actually played better when I wasn't associated with a club.

Right now I try and play at least two hours a day and do a lot of running. A lot of practicing alone.

Leve: *What are the basic fundamentals you stress when teaching beginning players?*

Williams: Most of our lessons are groups of four, one hour a week for four weeks, all beginners. The first week we go over the rules, the grip and a little bit on forehand and backhand strokes. The second week we stress the forehand and backhand and I give them a lot of drop and hit exercises. The third week we work on problem areas, usually back wall shots and balls that go into the corners. The last week is the only time I talk about strategy at all,—serves and other things to practice while they're warming up.

There aren't that many people who will rent an hour to go down alone and practice. So I give them things to practice while they're warming up prior to a match.

I give private lessons if the player has a particular problem that he or she wants to work on.

Leve: *Do you have many people who come to you just to play you?*

Williams: I have lots of people who do that. I think that's going to happen anywhere there's a pro, especially if you're a woman. Around Detroit the game caught on so fast there just weren't very many good players, male or female. So I got a lot of guys saying, "Ah, a woman pro,—let me at her." I get a lot of these phone calls every day, where they've read about me and want to play.

Leve: *Does a heavy lesson program take some of the fun out of playing?*

Williams: Yes, true. I really like teaching, but I'd rather be teaching something else. At Oakland I taught

a lot of different women's teams. The last two years it's been hard for me to keep up my enthusiasm for racquetball. That's one of the reasons I got out of managing and just work part time.

Leve: *Do you think the "woman's movement" has had a lot to do with the many women now playing?*

Williams: No, I don't think so. I just think it's an easy game for them to pick up. They can learn it in a few minutes and go out and have a good time. Once they try it, they're hooked. We have a lot of women members now. They bring other women, they enjoy the exercise, and they don't have to chase the ball down like in tennis.

Leve: *What is your view on professional sports for women, in general?*

Williams: I think it's great. I've always been interested in things like that. Unfortunately, I was born 10 years too soon. Every time things finally get good, I'm either too old or already out of that sport.

Just like racquetball. Maybe the money will get a lot better for the women, but I'm 28 now and by the time it does, I won't have many years left.

But pro sports for women is great. When I was playing and you were a woman who enjoyed sports, people looked at you like you were a little strange. Now it's much more acceptable, especially in high schools. When I was in high school we never had state championship competition. We were allowed one home game and one away game in basketball. Now teams have 15 and 20 game schedules.

It's just become much more acceptable, and I can't complain about the money.

Leve: *What has been your family's reaction to all your athletic endeavors?*

Williams: They've been really proud of it. They've always backed me up, yet never pushed me into anything. I've always done it on my own. My father's never seen a racquetball tournament, but he knows what's going on.

The first one my mother ever saw was last year was when I got hit in

the face with the racquet. She had never seen a racquetball game in her life, and she turned white when I got hit and left right then. I had to call my dad and tell him Mother was on the way home a little upset, but that I was all right. That was my family's only experience with racquetball.

Leve: *She never came back?*

Williams: No, she never came to another game. I don't think she wants to. I'm sure her concept of racquetball is completely wrong. I mean, to walk in for the first time and watch your daughter get hit in the head with blood gushing all over! I'm sure if you ask her what racquetball's like, she'd have a lot to say. She thinks it's a very dangerous game.

Leve: *Was that your most serious racquetball injury?*

Williams: That was my only one. Oh, a few sprained ankles and pulled muscles, but nothing serious.

Leve: *Do you see many injuries working at a club?*

Williams: Yes, especially with beginning players. I took a little survey myself and amazingly, found that almost half the injuries are self-inflicted. A lot of people hit themselves with the racquet. How can you guard against that? They have to learn to hit the ball correctly as well as learn court etiquette.

I think there should be some kind of mandatory eye guard. I wear them, especially when I give lessons or playing people I don't know. When I give lessons I really stress safety. I stand right on the court with them as they play and if I see anything develop that has the potential of being trouble, I stop them right away and point it out. I have never had an injury while giving a lesson.

Doubles is probably the biggest culprit of all. They shouldn't let beginners play doubles.

Leve: *I have said at least 90% of all racquetball injuries involving the racquet are the fault of the person who gets hit, including when you got hit. Do you agree with that?*

Williams: Yes, definitely. I would be the first to agree it was my fault when I got hit, and that's usually

the case. People just don't turn around and get out of the way of the ball. They serve the ball, back up with their butt sticking out looking at the front wall, and then they get clobbered. If they'd just take a peek over their shoulder to see where the ball is and then get out of the way.

Leve: *What do you see as the area where most improvement is necessary in women's racquetball?*

Williams: Well, other than increased prize money, if only a little, I think the biggest problem is refereeing, especially in women's events. I think a little more thought goes into who refs in the men's matches. I've been in some quarter and semi-final matches that were good matches and the referee was absolutely terrible. I think sometimes they just pick anybody they can. Sometimes they get the women to ref the women.

Leve: *Is that good or bad?*

Williams: I think that's terrible. If they're willing to go through the trouble to find a good ref for a tough round of 32 match in the men, they can go through the trouble for a good ref in a quarter-final women's match. The women just seem to be an afterthought.

I think the N.R.C. has done a real good job in promoting women's play and getting women's pro racquetball off the ground. I think they've been more than fair to us as individuals.

Leve: *I understand you've just signed a contract to play for Seamco. This must excite you.*

Williams: It does. They offered me a great deal, and I'll be able to go to all the major tournaments now. It took a long time for the deal to be put together but now that it's here I'm happy. It's going to make it really nice for me. I'll be able to play and that's what I really want to do.

A lot of manufacturers don't think that sponsoring women helps sell their products, but they're wrong. Every day I have people asking me about racquetball equipment. They see what I'm using and they'll go out and buy it.

Leve: *Do you wear a glove?*

Williams: Yes, I just started wearing one, about a year ago. I used to carry a little towel on the court and wipe my hands all the time. But I'd always lose one, two, maybe three points a game by losing the grip on my racquet, enough to cost me the game, so I went to a glove.

Leve: *Do you do much in the way of clinics or exhibitions?*

Williams: Yes, I do. I've done quite a few exhibitions at different clubs. I get quite a few requests for that, although now there are quite a few good players in the midwest, so it's tapered off.

Leve: *It seems that whenever a player wants to become national champ he or she goes to San Diego. Did you ever consider doing that?*

Williams: Yes, and I think it would have been fun. But I was married and working so it would have been hard. I'd like to go out there for a couple of weeks some time and learn as much as I can. But there's plenty of good players around now, enough so that it doesn't hold true that you have to go to San Diego.

I really believe that it's all in your head, mind over matter. Confidence in your game and concentration are the keys to success in racquetball. Anybody can go out and practice all they want. But I'd be a liar if I said I wouldn't like to go out to San Diego and take a few lessons from Brumfield.



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