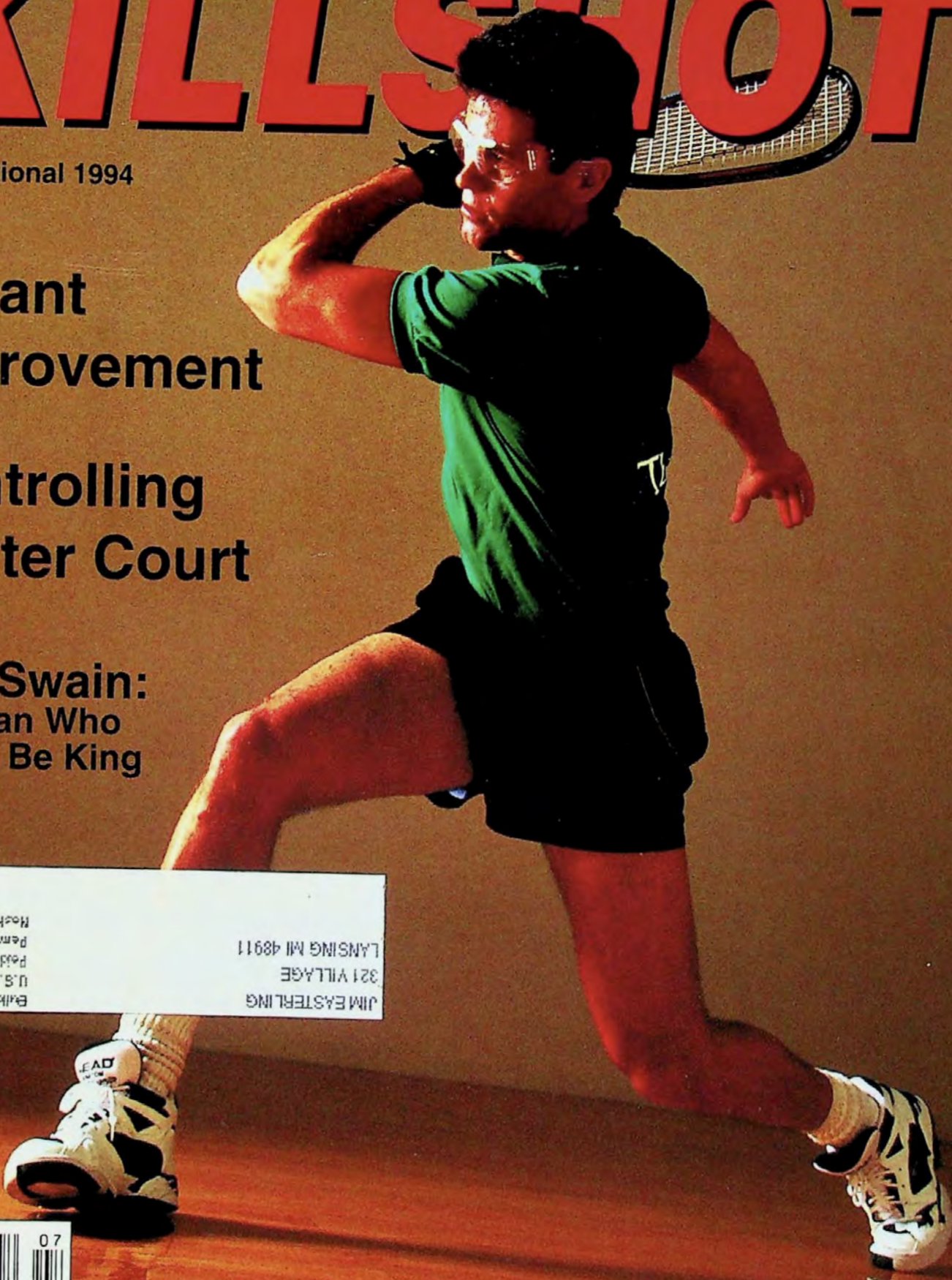


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Contributors

Some of the writers in this issue of **KILLSHOT**



A regular fixture at Maryland racquetball tournaments, **Alan Golombek** is a United States Racquet Stringers Association Certified

Racquet Specialist, A Professional Association of Racquetball Instructors Certified Instructor, American Amateur Racquetball Association Certified Referee, and Maryland Amateur Racquetball Association Rules Commissioner.

Clay Walker is a former newspaper sports writer and sports columnist, now working free-lance and contributing to various sports publications. An old fashioned newspaper man with a flair for depicting colorful characters and stirring controversy, Walker gave us last year's Ruben Gonzalez profile and now returns to the pages of **KILLSHOT**.

Del Villanueva is the Head Coach of the University of California at Davis Racquetball Team. A Professional Association of Racquetball Instructors Certified Advanced Instructor, and Associate Board Member for the California Amateur Racquetball Association, he has



contributed extensively to amateur racquetball publications, the PARI Instruction Manual, and is currently working on his own book: *Mental Tasks for*

Optimum Racquetball Play; Rehearsal Compliments Practice, and video: *Elite Training for Winning Racquetball*.

As a touring pro, **Fran Davis** was a three time national champion. Upon retirement from the women's pro tour, she has concentrated her efforts on coaching and teaching racquetball. A certifier and former east coast director for the Professional Association of Racquetball Instructors, she joined with Stu Hastings for several years

in conducting the Dynamic Duo series of camps. Recently, she launched her current string of clinics and camps in such exotic locations as Aruba and Alaska. As a coach Davis has worked with numerous national teams and world champions.



One of the brightest young stars to recently come from Canada, **Kelly Kerr's** junior racquetball history is exceptional. Formerly ranked #1 nationally in the sixteen and under and eighteen and under divisions, he is now a key player for Memphis State University's famous racquetball dynasty. As he continues maturing into a superb competitor, it turns out that he also has a knack for writing.

Woody Clouse has been described as one of the most colorful characters on the IRT. His court antics have engrossed crowds nearly as much as his blasting forehands and diving gets. Consistently one of the world's top sixteen players, he displays a solid fundamental game with more than his share of serious racquetball knowledge. The multi-time BIRAK IT national champion, he is still actively touring and working to co-author an upcoming racquetball instructional book.

Always in the center of the action both on and off the court, **Aaron Katz** is one of those unique individuals who seems to be able to do everything well. Legendary in his home Texas for teaching, coaching and promoting, he is also one of the world's best players. Consistently among the top sixteen pros even with an abbreviated touring schedule, he is recognized among the pro tour as being gifted with uncanny insight into the very heart of the game and the players. Now an attorney he still plays many pro stops, and stays active teaching and writing instructional articles.



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- 1 Contributors
- 4 Short Serves
- 9 Editorial
- 10 Instructional Special
In Control
- 12 Instructional Special
Instant Improvement
- 14 Stringers Log
- 17 IRT Tour
Swain Strikes Back
- 24 Rankings
VCI Spreadsheet
- 26 Cover Story
The Man Who Would Be King
- 33 IRT News
- 34 Home Court
- 36 Instructional Special
Double Your Pleasure
- 38 Instructional Special
Rotator Rehab
- 40 Instructional Special
Imagine That
- 41 Back to School Special
- 45 Instructional Special
Assertiveness
- 47 Ladies & Gentlemen, Larry has Left
the Building

The explosive excitement of the pro tour is explored with coverage of Las Vegas, The Pro Nationals in Portland, and the recently televised VCI Championship in Minneapolis. **Page 17** *Swain Strikes Back.*



Looking back on the past IRT season, Aaron Katz pulls no punches as he grades the top pros' performances **Page 41** *Back to School Special.*

Returning to the professional racquetball tour after an absence to play tennis, Cliff Swain seems to have a lock on number 1. **Page 26** *The Man Who Would Be King*



Cover: Cliff Swain, courtesy Doug Ganim, Head Racquet Sports

SPEED KILLS.



There are two ways to play racquetball. Fast and way too fast.
We recommend you play the latter way. Or die trying.

SHORT SERVES

AARON KATZ WISH LIST

Tim Sweeney comes back full time.

ESPN covers more events.

Somebody builds an affordable portable court so we can take our sport to the masses, rather than making them come to us.

The referees start calling more technicals when the players start complaining.

Hank Marcus continues to be the most innovative promoter in the sport and the Men's pro tour continues to blossom.

Clubs learn to make money off the sport of racquetball so it once again becomes a viable entity in the club business.

More rec center and public courts so that racquetball can still grow even if clubs do not make money.

Rogaine finally kicks in on my bald spot.

Now You See 'em Now You Don't

Retired or what?

Egan Inoue - Honolulu - former #1 ranked pro, former amateur world champion - announced official retirement, then came out of retirement to return to the tour, has been plagued by a string of injuries that have kept his schedule very irregular

Bret Harnett - Las Vegas - former #1 ranked pro - on again, off again with full time touring, latest word is that he is attempting retirement

Jack Newman - Chicago - former amateur national champion, former world intercollegiate champion - very consistent touring pro, has announced his official retirement from full-time touring for the new season, but still training, teaching camps, and may play a tournament here or there

Dan Obremski - Pittsburgh - former amateur doubles world champion - never officially retired, has missed several events with injuries and time conflicts

Mike Ceresia - Montreal - former Canadian amateur champion - pro tour regular, had hinted at retiring from tour, schedule was becoming less regular, now seems re-inspired, touring regularly, and playing better than ever

Tim Sweeney - Chicago - former amateur national champion, world intercollegiate champion - has had conflicts in the past between school and full-time touring, who knows what this season will bring?



Harnett



Inoue



Newman



Sweeney



Obremski



Ceresia

Andy Update

In the last installment of *Short Serves*, Andy Roberts was featured in painful position.

Robert H. Miller of the Campbell Clinic in Memphis patched Andy back into serviceable form and offers us this assessment: "The diagnosis was a chondral fracture of the lateral femoral condyle of the left knee. Arthroscopic drilling of the chondral defect was performed."

But doc, will he ever be able to play the violin again?

A - HEAD of the Game

The IRT has just announced a two year agreement with HEAD Athletic Footwear & Apparel. This comes on the heels of a successful working relationship between the two parties over the last two years while the IRT has expanded.

This groundbreaking agreement includes outfitting the pro players in the entire line of products and a year end bonus pool based on tournament performance that is the largest pool in the history of the sport, according to Commissioner Hank Marcus.

Guy Grubel, Vice President of HEAD Athletic Footwear & Apparel was excited about expanding involvement with the tour. "The IRT has emerged as a major influence in the sport of racquetball. The best players in the world showcase the incredible athleticism the sport demands," Grubel explained.

Norm Blum's Passing Shots

Reality Check

A racquetball product manager, who wishes to remain anonymous, admits he was sitting in an ivory tower and losing touch with the everyday racquetball player. "I hadn't played in years, but I finally got back into it." Now, instead of constantly crunching numbers and studying space age materials, he's playing the game. Call him at lunch time and he's probably on the court.

"I didn't realize what a great game racquetball is. It's a great workout and can be completed in a short amount of time, which is ideal in this age when people have little spare time," he says matter-of-factly. "Somehow, we the manufacturers have to put together an ad campaign like the NBA does with its 'I love this game.' We need to convey what a great sport it is and how much fun it really is. I just can't wait to play again. That's how pumped up I am about racquetball."

Just Like Mike

It was great to see the Sports Illustrated article on Cliff Swain. My main criticism of the article was its emphasis on the comparison between Swain and basketball icon Michael Jordan. I just don't see the comparison. Jordan gave up basketball because he accomplished everything possible in the sport. His attempt at baseball has been well

documented. The article stated that Swain was like Mike because he gave up racquetball for tennis. Swain's one-year exodus from racquetball was mainly because here he was No. 1 in the world and the reenumeration and adulation was nil. During his absence, professional racquetball turned itself around and finally began rewarding top players. I just wish the article dealt with Swain's great accomplishments in racquetball rather than bringing up Michael Jordan.

No More Alibis

Racquetball club personnel are always faced with people who forget their membership cards. If they play hard ball and insist on a card and don't allow him or her in they risk alienating the customer. There's also cases of players stealing or duplicating cards. And don't forget the front desk person who sees the member every day but doesn't realize the membership has lapsed. This problem has cost clubs thousands of dollars in lost revenue. There's a solution. In the near future you'll be putting your finger through a device which will scan your fingerprint. This will put an end to all those creative card-forgetting excuses.

Potpourri

How do you diplomatically tell your racquetball adversary that he needs to launder his clothes more than once a month? Hey, a racquetball court is tight quarters...Courts should be swept 2-3 times a day. Sand from the outside acts as sandpaper and can cut the life of a floor's finish in half...The new **KILLSHOT**



bandannas can be worn as a headband or around the head (like a pirate's headgear) to absorb balding players' sweat...**KILLSHOT** has a new line of apparel, including a NORM shirt. My wife tells me to keep my day job...On a personal note, my wife and I are happy to report our family is growing--Gregory Stuart was born in July. His big sister, Rachel, is very proud.

It takes two to tango

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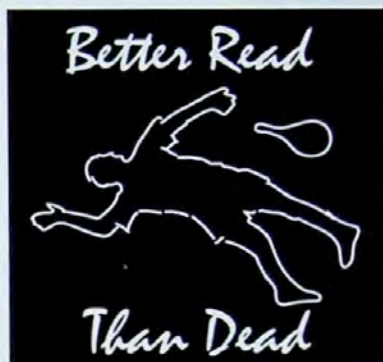
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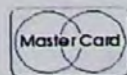
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KILLSHOT

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KILLSHOT is published five times a year by Quertermous and Quertermous, Inc. P.O. Box 8036, Paducah, Kentucky 42002-8036. Offices are located at 2212 Kentucky Avenue, Paducah, Kentucky 42003. ISSN # 1069-2614

Subscriptions in the U.S. and possessions are \$18.95 for one year, \$32.00 for two years; Canadian subscriptions are \$28.95 for one year; South American subscriptions are \$41.95 for one year; European subscriptions are \$56.95 for one year; Asian subscriptions are \$66.95 for one year. (Foreign subscriptions are due in U.S. funds) Back issues are available on selected issues.

Third-class postage paid at Nashville, Tennessee. Printed in September, 1994 (Volume 4, Number 3).

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(Editorial Comments)

Insatiable?

The summer racquetball slump has given way to the frenzied activity of the fall season once again. And, this season promises to be stronger than ever. Getting under way with ESPN coverage of the VCI Championship in Minneapolis, the IRT and Hank Marcus seem to be building steam with each passing pro stop.

Sales of Penn's new Pro Penn racquetball are surpassing even what the ball manufacturer of choice had hoped. And even though some organizations refuse to advertise it because of that big bad "pro" word, the new green ball has proved to be *some* ball and acceptance on the amateur and grass roots level has been nothing short of phenomenal.

Head's decision to pump major dollars into the Cliff Swain sponsorship may turn out to be the coup of the season. Expect some big things from them this season in support of the IRT and an aggressive plan to muscle some room at the top of the racquetball pile.

Spalding continues their tradition of leading the pack of racquet builders and showed some good ol' common sense in convincing Mike Ray to be so instrumental in the design of their new graphite composite Rival racquet. Ray continues to be one of the big pluses of the IRT and shows all the promise of evolving into one of the game's senior statesmen in a few years.

VCI has again shown their full

fledged support of professional racquetball by sponsoring elite events across the country and spending a considerable sum in becoming *THE* corporate name in racquetball.

The IRT's newly developed satellite tour is being grabbed-up as fast as the dates are being opened. All the action and excitement of playing pro rules has created a frenzy across the country with some major events such as the *Long Island Open* and Kansas City's *Top Gun* signing on as stops on the IRT's satellite schedule.

In short, big things are happening. The momentum is growing and the public appetite for professional racquetball has become insatiable.



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In Control



Dominating the Rally by Controlling Center Court

While a good player can often come up with a winner from a terrible position, winning consistently usually means controlling the rally and therefore center court. By establishing a stronghold on the center position, you will find your opponent's would-be winners may be frequently in reach. By controlling the rally, you minimize your opponent's effectiveness, take away many of his weapons, and force his ill-timed or weak responses.

Racquetball's most widely accepted guru, Steve Strandemo, uses the center court concept at the very heart of all his teachings. Strandemo asserts that you cannot control a rally without controlling center court (**KILLSHOT** # 2, September 1991).

Effectively Jockeying for Position

Good anticipation is vital to claim your proper share of the center zone. Do not be pushed out of position by an opponent that moves inefficiently for the ball. You will undoubtedly face your share of players that move to follow the path of the ball, rather than move to the proper position for their next shots. These players will attempt to keep you running out of their path. Proper jockeying for position should involve only a

side step or two to keep control of the center.

One of the best lessons that can be learned by watching pro matches is orderly and efficient jockeying for position. Check out pro matches for players' clean organized movement around one another in the center. It really doesn't matter when the matches were played, this movement was basically the same twenty years ago as it is today.

Clearing for Your Opponents' Shots Without Surrendering Control or Position

To appropriately clear for your opponent's shots, remember to at least give him clear shots for the same-side down-the-line, and for the cross-court. Once you have allowed these opportunities, move no further from center court. Clear only as far as you must, since anything more is giving him an undue advantage. Remember the better you execute your own shots, the less center court you should have to give up for his return. Your well-placed passes, pinches, kills, and ceilings, should effectively move your opponent to the walls, front court, and deep court respectively,

allowing you to hold more valuable center space.

You will often see more advanced players clear for their opponents' shots by jumping straight up. While this is great for giving them the clear shot while yielding very little position, it can be painful if your timing is off or if your opponent routinely shoots the ball unusually high. Save this technique for an opponent who really understands the rally and shares good anticipation with you.

Opt for movements that involve efficient one or two step motions to

quickly and easily clear, then regain advantageous position. If you find yourself constantly running to awkwardly clear for your opponent's shot, try one or all of these: 1) check yourself on video tape to get an idea of the problem and a plan to correct it for yourself 2) try a club pro or instructional camp for some better insight 3) put in some serious work on your own shots to keep them down and keep them out of center court so that your opponent must shoot from poor position that doesn't require your surrendering any ground.

According to successful clinician and US team coach Fran Davis, playing the center court area puts you in the location of 70% of all shots in an average rally. (**KILLSHOT** #10, Summer 1993)

The center court game is a game of less-is-more. Less effort makes more precise shots, less movement to the ball leaves more energy to compete. Movement becomes a few long strides to the ball. It also means keeping your racquet at or near the ready position, that is waist high or higher. It means knowing when to cut off the ball, when to wait for it off the back wall, how to jockey for position without hindering, and where you must move to give adequate clearance to your opponent's shot while giving up the least amount of center court.

At each level of play, these concepts become more clearly defined. At higher skill levels, movement is much more efficient, anticipating your opponent's choices becomes easier, and playing strategically is much more fun. For the beginner or intermediate player, it may be a guessing game to judge just how much to clear for your opponent's shots or how to effectively jockey for position.

Attacking the Ball to Control Center Court

Steve Strandemo teaches basic guidelines to determine how to attack the ball to surrender as little of center court as possible based upon how high your opponent's shot strikes the front wall at a substantial velocity.

Among Strandemo's suggestions are:

0 - 12"

At this height the ball will be out of reach at worst and pull you into front court at best.

12" - 24"

The ball will bounce once then travel into or very near the center court area and should be cut off.

24" - 36"

Volley this shot to hold center court, do not be tempted to back up to let it drop and thus give up position.

36" - 48" +

This one usually comes off the back wall for a center court set up.

(According to Strandemo's teaching, you should be comfortable taking a shot from an open stance to cut off many balls since a set up is not always an option in the midst of playing a rally.)

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Instant

By Woody Clouse

Sounds too good to be true? How can there be some great secret that will immediately improve anyone's game? The truth is that there are a number of key concepts in racquetball that are all necessary to be understood thoroughly for any player to play to his true potential. A better understanding of these ideas almost always brings immediate, dramatic improvement to any game. So read on, understand each concept and incorporate it into your game. Then get ready to get better - fast!

1 Have fun. It is much easier to stay positive when playing and improving is fun. Fun is the strongest driving force behind anyone who plays and improves for years on end. If you have become too burned out to enjoy the process, it is difficult to maintain any constant growth. The easiest way to insure the fun factor is never to play unless it's fun. If it isn't fun, stop playing until the racquetball bug bites you again. It will come back sooner than you think. This is vital to the longevity of your racquetball career, so take your fun seriously.

2 Practice racquet preparation. This simply means to hold your racquet eye level in the center of your body whenever you're not hitting the ball. Doing this will help a number of areas with your game. The first improvement will be with your court coverage and

foot speed. Your movement is largely hindered without the assistance from your arms moving. The harder you pump your arms, the quicker you will be able to move. This cannot be done with your arms down by your side. The next benefit you'll receive from proper racquet preparation is increased reaction time. You can't fully swing through a shot unless your racquet is in a ready position. By keeping the racquet up, your body and arm will automatically be set whenever you turn to react to a ball. With the increase in time that you will now have your level of consistency and shot selection will also improve as well.

10 Quick Tips to Improving Your Game

3 Focus on the serve. Many articles have been written over the years concerning the importance of the serve. The serve is probably the single most important part of your game. Unfortunately it is the most overlooked part of the game by many players. By serving well, you may be able to dominate an opponent. You can also hide many of

your weaknesses. Basically, the idea is to constantly attack your opponent's weaknesses. The ultimate objective is to either hit an ace or to produce a weak return that gives you an easy shot. Applying a well-developed plan of attack should never be taken lightly. Always allow ample time to execute each serve. Once you have committed to a certain plan of attack, take time to visualize the execution of the serve. You'll also benefit greatly from knowing how your opponent is going to react to your various serves. Knowing this will increase your anticipation, and shot preparation. If you do lock into a serve that is producing weak returns, stay with it, but try to hit various angles that will attack the same weakness. This will make it harder for the receiver to determine and execute strong returns.

4 Prepare for your return of serve. Attack the strong server by drawing him into the rally. The best way to control a rally is to control center court. The most sure fire way of grabbing center court is by hitting ceiling balls. Do not pass up the plums when you get them, or clean passes when you can, but remember the opportunities with the ceiling ball if you cannot. Being too aggressive on the serve return by forcing shots can kill your consistency. When you begin to miss offensive shots, your opponent just has to wait for a set up or a skip. Here the receiver is beating himself. Look

Improvement

for the offensive opportunities, but stay ready to go to the ceiling then grab center court when you do not get them.

5 Observe the six inch rule. Can you remember the last time you hit a ball six inches above the floor and lost the rally? There simply is not a need to try to hit the front wall any lower. Shooting lower only increases your chances of skipping the shot, especially if you're hitting on the move. By using the six inch rule, you will instantly increase your margin for error, therefore, increasing your consistency and level of play.

6 Choose wisely between the pass and the pinch. Pass your opponent (down-the line, or cross court) when you are behind him and pinch the ball (the side - front shot) when you are in front of him. This will always force him to move around or by you. Not only does this keep you in center court, it also moves him from the farthest point on the court.

7 Rule center court. The center court is definitely the win or lose factor in racquetball. If you dominate center court, you win. If you are not spending any time in center court, chances of winning are remote. During the rally, center court should be your highest priority. If you are not spending much time there, you need to know what shots your opponent is using and what shots you can use to counter them. If your shots are kicking off the walls or staying up, you probably will not be spending much time in center court.

8 Know when you have a set-up, and when you do not. Shot selection has to be smart and disciplined in order for a player to play well every day. Most people don't have trouble with this when they are hitting a plum. It is when you have to move for a ball and are forced off balance that problems arise. If your body is unstable, or your feet are not properly positioned, shoot for the ceiling, regain your balance, then move to center court.

9 Watch the ball. Since no player with a shred of intelligence plays today without eyeguards, there is no excuse for not watching the ball. You cannot hit or react to what you cannot see. Before you brush past this as obvious and trivial, can you honestly say that your concentration on the ball is as good as it should be?

10 Be honest with yourself about your game. Many players read instructional articles, and understand the concepts. But few players have a realistic assessment of which concepts they employ, and which they do not. If you know better, why are you still losing? Learn it, then really do it.



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Stringer's Log



**Racquets
& accessories
of some of the top players
in the game**

By Alan Golombek

Mike Ray keeps the tension up, stringing his Spalding Thunderheat racquet with 40-lbs. of pressure on the mains and 42-lbs. of pressure on the crosses. His is one of the tightest strung racquets on the IRT circuit.

Player	Rank	Racquet	String/Gauge
Jack Newman	#8	Ektelon Eminence	Micro Hex XL 17
Mike Ray ¹	#5	Spalding Thunderheat	Spalding Assault 17
Cliff Swain	#1	Head 175G	Gosen OG Sheep Micro 17
Andy Roberts ²	#2	Ektelon Eminence	Ektelon Mirada 16
Ruben Gonzalez	#7	Ektelon Cyrocco	Ektelon Pro ET
John Ellis	#12	Pro Kennex ASM 110 Superwide	Pro Kennex/Gosen Micro 19
Marcy Lynch	#14	Spalding Assault Lite	Forten Boss 16
Mary Lyons ³		Ektelon Eminence	Hex Classic 16
Lynne Coburn	#5	Ektelon Eminence	Gosen OG Sheep Micro 16
Robin Levine	#3	Ektelon Eminence	Ektelon Mirada 16
Lynn Adams ⁴		Ektelon Strobe	Ektelon Mirada 16

Notes on the Chart

1. Mike Ray takes as much of the bumper guard off as possible to keep the racquet head light.

2. Andy Roberts prefers a 50/50 string pattern.

3. Mary Lyons is the current National Doubles champ along with Susan Morgan-Phaler. She plays without a glove.

4. Lynn Adams, six time National champ is still playing pro and amateur doubles.

Pro racquetball players are acutely aware of the importance of a well strung racquet and regularly have their racquets strung (usually with new grommets) and grips changed, particularly before a tournament. Most players wear some sort of glove when playing.

Hard hitting John Ellis relies on pure power for his returns, keeping the tension light on his Pro Kennex ASM 110 Superwide. Strung at 19 lbs. of pressure, Ellis' racquet is one of the loosest on the tour.



Tension

Grip

Vibration Dampner

Tether

35 lbs.	Ektelon Rubber	No	Ektelon Raqcord
40 lbs. ms, 42 lbs. xs	Persona Molded	No	Wristlacer
28 lbs.	Python Rubber	No	Wristlacer
35 lbs.	Ektelon Rubber	No	Ektelon Raqcord
40 lbs.	Leather	Gamma Schockbuster	Ektelon Raqcord
19 lbs.	Gexco Rubber	Gamma Schockbuster	Wristlacer
34 lbs. ms., 30 lbs. xs	Forten Synthetic	No	Wristlacer
43 lbs.	Ektelon Cushion Grip	Sorbgee	Wristlacer
36 lbs.	Ektelon Rubber	No	Ektelon Raqcord
42 lbs.	Ektelon Rubber	Powerweave	Ektelon Raqcord
40 lbs.	Ektelon Cushion Grip	No	Ektelon Raqcord

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Swain Strikes Back

Episode IV in which Cliff Swain tries to take over the universe

Las Vegas Las Vegas Pro Am

• Twenty four players in the qualifiers • Gonzalez takes a flying leap out of the tourney • Swain wins ...Again • Roberts and Doyle battle for "Best of the Rest" • Johnson and Newman bow out in the first round • Coulter and co. host a great show behind front wall glass •

Highlights

With one of the best qualifying fields of the IRT, the tournament seemed well underway by the time the first round even started. An interesting line-up of upsets began with Memphis State's Scott Reiff's easy three game dispatch of tour veteran Dave Johnson. Southern California's Steve Lerner continued to impress IRT fans by dismissing #9 seed John Ellis in the same round. Adam Karp, the newest addition to the Jim Carson coaching team posted the upset of the season by handing #7 seed Jack Newman his only first round defeat of the past four years.

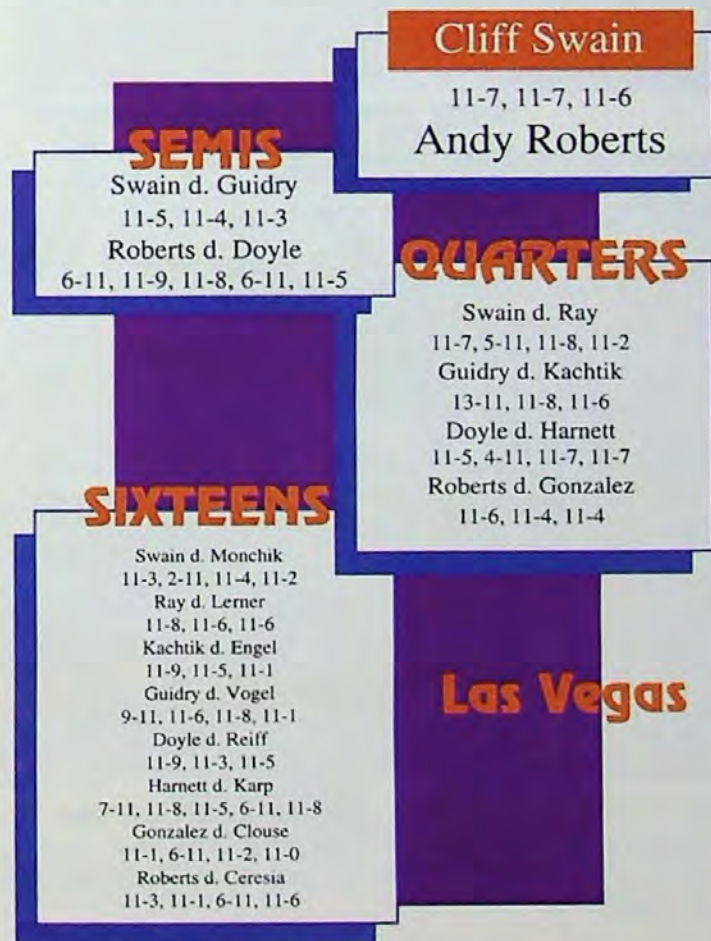
Karp nearly kept the momentum alive in the next round as he pushed Bret Harnett to the wire for a five game near-miss. In the end, Harnett's low-boards domination in his home club proved too much for the rookie.

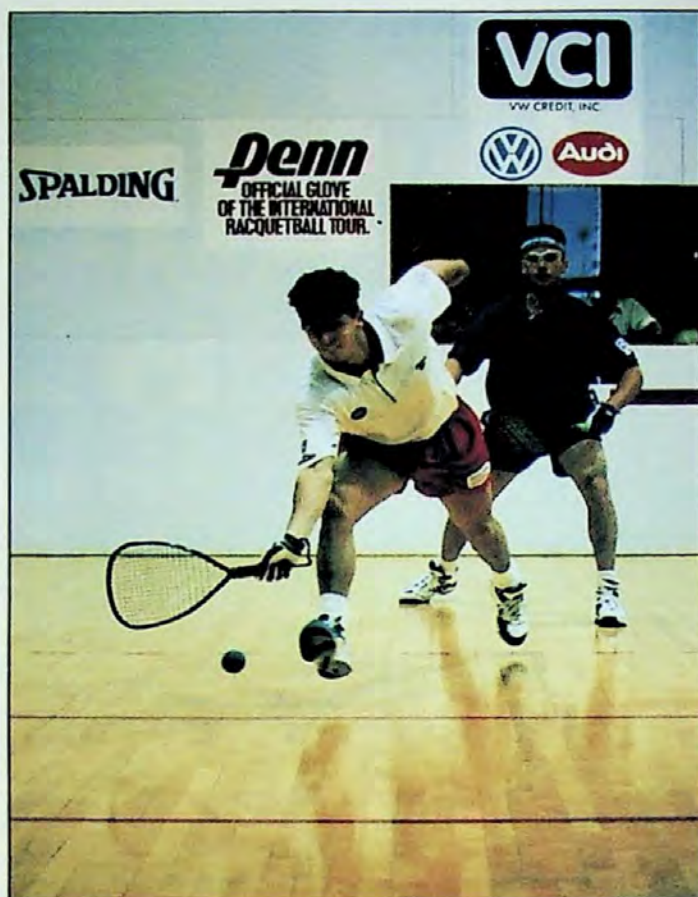
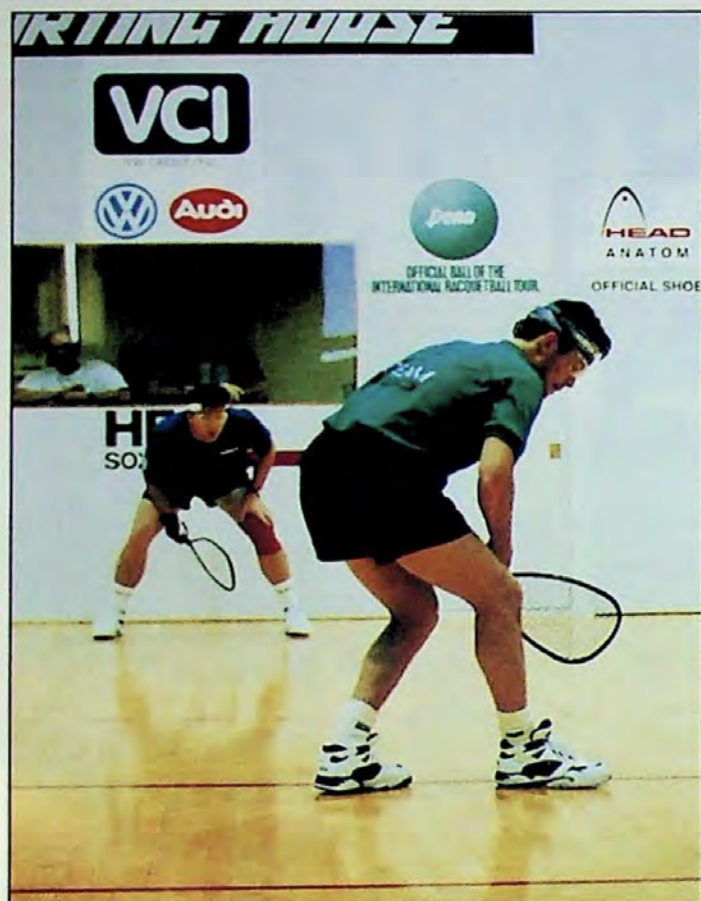
In the quarters, Mike Ray showed

signs of rising from his recent slump by making a courageous stand against Cliff Swain in the clash of the southpaws. Mike Guidry handily eliminated his former mentor Drew Kachtik in three straight. In a match that rocked the building, Tim Doyle was able to trash Harnett's hopes of a repeat of his 1992 victory at the Vegas stop. One of Ruben Gonzalez' trademark diving gets in the second game against Andy Roberts resulted in a crash landing that knocked him out of sync and eventually out of the match.

The semi's provided two of the best match-ups on today's pro tour. Two fast lefties, Swain and Guidry serve up a flying circus of rallies that never end. While Swain packs tremen-

dous experience and confidence, Guidry boasts one of the few victories over him





From Las Vegas, clockwise from top left: Cliff Swain about to unleash against Andy Roberts in the final. Massachusetts' Jason Krickorian reaches for a forehand in the first round against Cliff Swain. An Andy Robert's pass takes Tim Doyle off his feet in the semis.

this season. In Las Vegas, Swain easily managed to keep alive his recent streak against Guidry with a quick three game win. Old rivals, Doyle and Roberts each combine shotgun blast drives with textbook movement and anticipation. The victor in most of their recent confrontations, Roberts advanced in Las Vegas but not without five difficult games.

Roberts' increasing limp resulting from a recent knee injury in Pittsburgh may have been the biggest factor in the Swain - Roberts final. While Roberts has had little success against Swain all season, Swain's win in three one-sided games in the final certainly reflected the degree of difficulty the bad knee was causing Roberts. With the easy win, Swain had already begun to set his sights on Minneapolis and the televised final.

Minneapolis VCI World Championships

• Pros crank it up for ESPN coverage •
Roberts out of action with bad knee •

Cliff Swain

2-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-6

Tim Doyle

SEMIS

Swain d. Kachtik

11-8, 5-11, 8-11, 11-2, 11-7

Doyle d. Ray

11-1, 11-6, 11-4

QUARTERS

Swain d. Clouse

11-9, 11-7, 11-2

Kachtik d. Gonzalez

9-11, 8-11, 11-7, 11-4, 11-3

Ray d. Guidry

11-2, 9-11, 11-7, 2-11, 11-4

Doyle d. Ellis

11-9, 6-11, 5-11, 11-2, 11-1

SIXTEENS

Swain d. Fowler

7-11, 4-11, 11-2, 11-5, 11-4

Clouse d. Harnett

11-9, 11-13, 11-0, 11-4

Gonzalez d. Katz

11-9, 11-5, 11-9

Kachtik d. Monchik

11-5, 1-11, 11-1, 3-11, 11-2

Guidry d. Ceresia

11-3, 11-0, 11-2

Ray d. Greenfield

13-11, 6-11, 8-11, 11-4, 11-2

Ellis d. Obremski

11-3, 11-9, 11-8

Doyle d. Harripersad

11-5, 8-11, 11-4, 11-2

VCI Championship (Minneapolis)



Mike Guidry covers ground in the VCI World Championships.

Newman begins early retirement • Ray climbs out of slump • Swain just keeps winning • Peggy Clark, Ron Strom, and the Northwest Clubs' Staff pull it all together for the most widely seen tournament of the year

Highlights

Still the only IRT event televised on ESPN, the VCI World Championship provides an added bonus for the IRT pros with valuable national exposure. As racquetball's major link with the general public, ESPN allows players the opportunity to write their own names into history.

While most of the thirty-two's went true to form, the most notable performance was turned in by Canada's Sherman Greenfield. With his strong "squash roots" evident from the onset, Greenfield's unorthodox style proved too much for a less-than-100% Inoue power game. It was a sort of mini revenge for Inoue's victories over Greenfield in two world amateur

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Above : a long shot as Cliff Swain clears for Tim Doyle in the VCI championship final.

Left top to bottom: gets from the floor by Cliff Swain, Drew Kachtik, and Mike Guidry, all in Minneapolis.

Sudsy Monchik

11-4, 11-6, 8-11, 11-7

Drew Kachtik

SEMIS

Kachtik d. Swain

5-11, 12-10, 6-11, 11-8, 12-10

Monchik d. Doyle

11-4, 11-5, 11-5

QUARTERS

Swain d. Clouse

12-14, 11-7, 11-1, 11-0

Kachtik d. Obremski

12-10, 11-7, 9-11, 11-9

Monchik d. Inoue

8-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-3

Doyle d. Gonzalez

11-6, 11-8, 11-7

SIXTEENS

Swain d. Karp

11-8, 11-2, 2-11, 12-10

Clouse d. Ellis

8-11, 4-11, 11-8, 15-13, 12-10

Obremski d. Guidry

2-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-5

Kachtik d. Fowler

11-4, 3-11, 11-2, 8-11, 12-10

Inoue d. Roberts

11-0, 11-13, 12-10, 11-5

Monchik d. Ray

1-11, 13-11, 9-11, 13-11, 11-6

Gonzalez d. Harnett

11-4, 11-5, 11-9

Doyle d. Vogel

11-7, 7-11, 11-9, 11-3

Nationals (Portland)

championships.

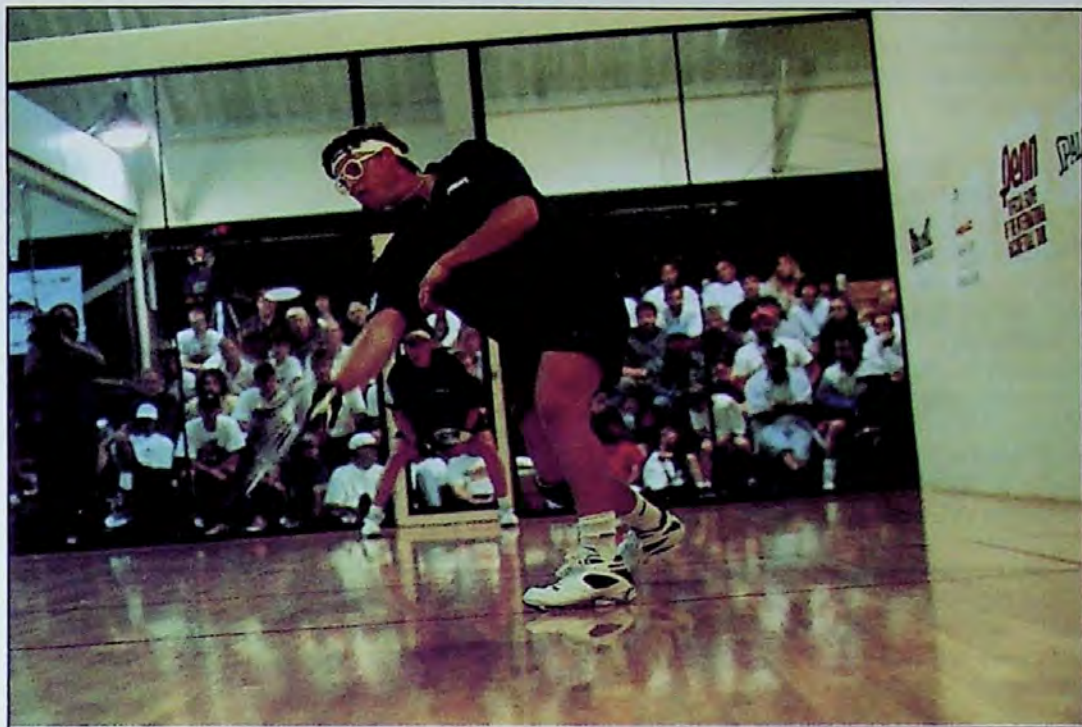
Ray ended Greenfield's run in the sixteens with precise control. Clouse claimed a big win that included the elusive doughnut against the veteran Harnett. Kachtik found major difficulty with rookie hot shot Monchik. But the biggest "one-that-nearly-got-away" from the master was Swain's five game close call against Fowler.

The quarters found Doyle and Ellis hitting serious missiles before Doyle prevailed in five. Ray returned to championship form for the first time in months with a big win over Guidry. Swain eliminated BIRAK IT king Clouse in true Swain style. In what may be the best head to head match on the tour, Kachtik fought off arch rival Gonzalez for five wonderful blood and guts games.

Ray never knew what hit him as Doyle blasted ball after ball for a lightening fast win in three straight. Finding himself down two games to one in the fourth, Swain fell back into sync and staged a rally that captured the next two games and the win.

While many players claim renewed vigor in their sports or a revamped training program that will take them to the next level, Doyle has let his performance back up his statements. In mid season **KILLSHOT** reported Doyle's recommitment to training and improving (**KILLSHOT** # 12 Winter 1994). Now after Doyle's playing the best, most consistent ball of his pro career, it seems that there must have been something to it. With his only real difficulties coming from Swain and a healthy Roberts, Doyle may just be onto something that could produce even better results in the new season.

In the final which can be seen nationally in August and September, Doyle started out as though about to repeat his upset of Swain from the Atlanta VCI event. By the second game, however, Swain had found the rhythm to unsettle Doyle. With Swain's constant pressure and the intensity of playing on ESPN, Doyle's frustration quickly became apparent in his rising temper and numerous arguments. Swain just went to work and systematically overcame one of the best constructed games in the sport. An outstanding match for television,



Drew Kachtik delivers one of his trademark lob serves in the national championship final in Portland.

ANYTHING ELSE IS JUST A MITTEN.



The Penn Tac Racquetball Glove has a leather grip and padding in the knuckles. It's the only recommended clothing for serious players that want to smash some balls, not build some snowmen.

The Official Glove of the IRT

the VCI Championship final went down as a classic example of modern racquetball.

Portland IRT Nationals

• *Sudsy who?* • *Inoue makes a stand* • *Obremski's home away from home* • *Kachtik regains consciousness* • *Karp becoming familiar* • *Multnomah Athletic Club still the most amazing facility in the world* •

Highlights

The shock of entering Portland's enormous (600,000 square feet of intensity!) Multnomah Athletic Club is just as powerful year after year. After serving as the stage for the Hogan/Yellen showdown for several years, then welcoming the season's eight finest for the Tournament of Champions for the past three years, the "MAC" began a new tradition in 1994 by hosting the IRT pro nationals. Portland has produced a tough new breed of players, and has become home to top pro Tim Doyle. The city also serves as home base for IRT commissioner Hank Marcus who has built the most solid pro tour since its inception in the

early 1970's.

The round of sixteen heated up early beginning with the Guidry/Obremski match. One of the season's bona fide hot shots, Guidry came out smokin' for two easy wins only to find Obremski turning on the heat in the third. After winning the elite Tournament of Champions events on this same court in 1991 and 1992, Obremski felt right at home as he dug deep to pull out

Serious follow-through from the amazing backhand of Sudsy Monchik.

his best showing of the season and a surprise victory.

Kachtik seemed to get a wake-up call while receiving for match point in the fifth game against Fowler. After some lack-luster play for some weeks from the former national champion, Kachtik regained his championship stride to rally for the 12-10 win and a sigh of relief. Nineteen year-old Monchik, winner of every juniors' title under the sun in recent years, came back from a Ray two game and 9-2 lead to pull out the upset. Egan Inoue, making a rare appearance, returned to the form that had made him a world champion for the win over a less than 100% Roberts. Southern California's Karp remained impressive with a strong showing in a four game loss to Swain following a good win over Tony Jelso in the first round. The longest battle of the evening featured great 1990's style racquetball with Clouse squaring off against Ellis. In a marathon blood & guts battle that ended at 12:30 AM, Clouse came back from a two game deficit to claim the big win and close one of the best



Deliverin' the Doughnuts



Swain 11, Clouse 0 Portland quarters
Guidry 11, Ceresia 0 Minneapolis 16s

Clouse 11, Harnett 0 Minneapolis 16s
Gonzalez 11, Clouse 0 Las Vegas 16s



Sudsy Monchik scrambles to bring the action to front court in his championship upset of Drew Kachtik.

In the Final, Monchik dictated the tempo from the beginning. After winning games one and two easily, Monchik allowed room for Kachtik to come back for the 11 - 9 win in the third. Kachtik faced the crowd, clenched his fist, and began to key-up for the come-back. It did not happen.

With over 700 watching at courtside and thousands more watching the television broadcast across the northwest, Monchik stormed through the fourth and final game with a vengeance. With unbelievable gets and one of the premiere backhands in the sport, the "kid" from New

York landed the upset, and asserted himself as a force with which to be reckoned.

rounds of sixteen to date.

In the quarters, a one game to none lead was not enough for Clouse as Swain capitalized on his fatigue for the win in four. Kachtik won the crucial points against Obremski to deny him another Portland victory. Monchik handled Inoue with excellent controlled power and great gets to advance to the semis. With Doyle's hometown victory over Gonzalez, the crowd waited eagerly for the Doyle/Monchik semi.

With a rally cry of "Do you got the love" throughout the event, Monchik's flamboyant personality rocked the courts and provided a level of confidence against Doyle usually reserved for the veteran toward the rookie. All the anticipation was answered quickly as Monchik rolled past Doyle in three for one major upset.

The Swain /Kachtik semi was another story. After Swain's speedy first game win, Kachtik gutted-out the next extended game to tie the game count at one. After splitting the next two, each player seemed to turn up the intensity. At the end of the Friday night mini-drama, Kachtik managed to slay a giant and regain some of his former stature at the top of the tour.

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But if you like it hot, play the Penn Ultra Blue Racquetball. And if your opponent objects, hey, just point out that the door's not locked.

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VCI Spreadsheet

IRT

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1. | Cliff Swain (1)
Braintree, Massachusetts |
| 2. | Tim Doyle (3)
Huntington Beach, California |
| 3. | Andy Roberts (2)
Memphis, Tennessee |
| 4. | Drew Kachtik (5)
Dallas, Texas |
| 5. | Mike Guildry (4)
Dallas, Texas |
| 6. | Mike Ray (8)
Hilton Head, South Carolina |
| 7. | Ruben Gonzalez (7)
Staten Island, New York |
| 8. | Jack Newman (6)
Hoffman Estates, Illinois |
| 9. | John Ellis (9)
Stockton, California |
| 10. | Woody Clouse (10)
Jacksonville, Florida |
| 11. | Sudsy Monchik
Staten Island, New York |
| 12. | Dan Obremski (12)
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| 13. | Bret Harnett (11)
Las Vegas, Nevada |
| 14. | Egan Inoue (13)
Honolulu, Hawaii |
| 15T. | Aaron Katz (14)
Dallas, Texas |
| 15T. | Dan Fowler
Silver Springs, Maryland |

WPRA

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1. | Michelle Gould (1)
Boise, Idaho |
| 2. | Marci Drexler (2)
San Diego, California |
| 3. | Robin Levine (3)
Sacramento, California |
| 4. | Cheryl Gudinas (4)
Lisle, Illinois |
| 5. | Lynne Coburn (5)
Baltimore, Maryland |
| 6. | Molly O'Brien (6)
Souderton, Pennsylvania |
| 7. | Laura Fenton (7)
Lincoln, Nebraska |
| 8. | Chris Evon (8)
San Diego, California |
| 9. | Ellen Crawford (9)
Minoa, New York |
| 10. | Roz Olson (10)
New Paltz, New York |
| 11. | Caryn McKinney (11)
Atlanta, Georgia |
| 12. | Janet Myers (12)
Charlotte, North Carolina |
| 13. | Marcy Lynch (13)
North Wales, Pennsylvania |
| 14. | Lorraine Galloway (14)
Jamaica Estates, New York |
| 15T. | Kim Machiran (15T)
Ballwin, Missouri |
| 15T. | Dee Ferreira-Worth (15T)
Anaheim Hills, California |

IRT rankings provided by World Racquet Sports Association

VCI Challenge Cup Series (1994 Final)

1. Cliff Swain
2. Tim Doyle
3. Andy Roberts
4. Drew Kachlik
5. Mike Guidry
6. Mike Ray
- 7T. Ruben Gonzalez
- 7T. Jack Newman

American Amateur Racquetball Association

Open

1. Michael Bronfeld
 2. Jimmy Lowe
 3. Rick Baer
 4. Doug Ganim
 5. John Ellis
-
1. Lorraine Galloway
 2. Dana Sibell
 3. Cheryl Gudinas
 4. Robin Levine
 5. Elaine Hooghe

Racquetball Canada

1. Sherman Greenfeld
 2. Simon Roy
 3. Mike Ceresia
 4. Haydn Jones
 5. Doug McQuarrie
-
1. Carol McFetridge
 2. Sue McTaggart
 3. Josee Grandmaitre
 4. Vicki (Brown) Shanks
 5. Linda Ellerington

Kentucky Racquetball Association

Open

1. Jimmy Lowe
2. Greg Short
3. Carl Gatewood
4. Troy Moore
5. Mark Isley
6. John Stocker
7. Trip Duperrieu
8. Bob Dabney
9. Kelvin Vanatrease
10. Enrique Gumucio

1. Marsha Berry
2. Ellie Morgan
3. Barbara Bibb
4. Heather Hornick

A

1. Gail Irwin
2. Tammy Hancock
3. Lindy Wood
4. Carolyn Rogers
5. Lori Sherman



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The Man Who

With 14 wins in the last 19 pro stops, Cliff Swain has become the undisputed “King of the Court” After the lull that spanned the second part of the 1980’s, he is producing the excitement that’s bringing fans back to professional racquetball. His exploits have earned not only the fear and respect of other pros, but a place in history.

By Clay Walker

Cliff Swain’s swagger hasn’t changed. Nor has his opponents’ disdain toward him. But Swain’s oft-misunderstood, seldom appreciated air of confidence is a great deal more justified as he prepares for the 1994-95 season.

Swain, the latest in racquetball’s line of hot shots, is also the most prolific. Not since the days of Marty Hogan has anyone dominated the game as Swain did last season. Like Hogan, Swain’s success (14 wins in 19 tournaments in 1993-94) is matched only by his confidence — a trait that has not endeared him to his peers, but has served as a tool to propel him to his current stronghold of the No. 1 ranking. Natural speed and agility, a drive and commitment to improvement second to none, and an almost supernatural sense of timing and movement have provided Swain with a good basis for his confidence. His confidence is evident as he sizes up the competition standing between him and an equally productive performance this year.

“My first objective is to take care of myself,” he says.

“I need to be physically prepared and mentally prepared. If I accomplish that, there should be no one who can beat me.”

Hogan, certainly the most celebrated of all the greats, agrees with his heir apparent. “I’ve told Cliff many times that if he takes it seriously there’s no reason he can’t win every time he goes out,” he said.

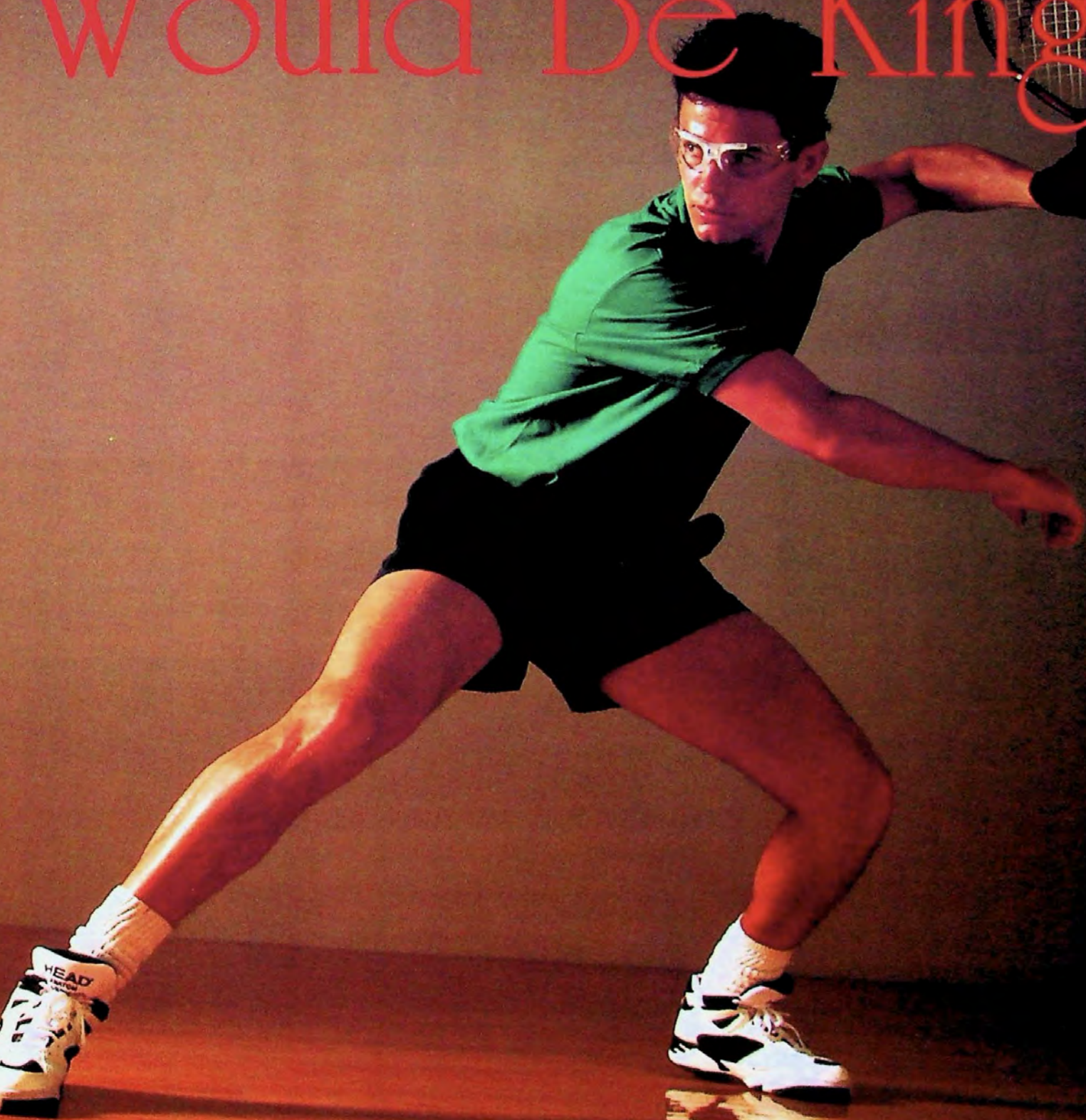
“What will kill Cliff is the level of boredom that will start creeping up on him. When he wants to, he can crush anybody.”

Swain’s career began as Hogan’s long reign as the sport’s undisputed king was winding down. Surprisingly, the hard-hitting southpaw from Braintree, Massachusetts, was most influenced by the control game of Dave Peck. Swain says while his style is much faster than Peck’s he learned a great deal about mental toughness and an emphasis on fundamentals from his idol. Still, it was Hogan who shared Swain’s most recognizable attribute — attitude.

“Confidence is absolutely necessary. Some people see it as arrogance, but you have to have confidence in what you’re doing,” Swain says. “Marty was awesome in that respect. I’ve seen people become totally intimidated by his confidence and sometimes his opponents would be irate over his lack of concern for whom he was playing. But he was just so confident he’d win no matter who his opponent was. I can get along with the other players, but the cold, hard fact is that they are



Would Be King



trying to take something I have. Sometimes the players and fans don't like me, but I think this 'good guys and bad guys' thing makes things even more exciting on the court."

Hogan, whose brashness won over and



lost a great many fans, is quick to point out that Swain's impressive run of success lacks longevity ("Don't put him in my class until he's done it year after year after year.") and victories over the depth of competition with which Hogan played ("Put today's players against the players of my day with the same equipment and they'd get shut out."). With less star-status and media hype than

Hogan, Mike Yellen made a claim to longevity with five national championships throughout the eighties. Hogan's original rival, Charlie Brumfield ruled racquetball in the seventies and is still widely considered to be the greatest player of all time. While we have seen these players compared to Hogan many times, Hogan prefers that the media wait a few years to draw comparisons with Swain.

Sorry Marty. The fact is the sport has been crying out for a hero. Today's players believe that, in truth, it is much more difficult to dominate now than it was a decade

ago, with more tournaments and less prize money creating even more of a win-at-all-costs approach to the game. Few IRT players can agree with Hogan's assessment of today's field. Players at the top such as Andy Roberts, Drew Kachtik, and Tim Doyle snicker at Hogan's remarks. The best rookies of recent seasons, Mike Guidry, John Ellis, and Sudsy Monchik have little time for such comparisons.



Three of the game's other undisputed "Kings of the Court": Marty Hogan (center), Mike Yellen (inset: upper-left), and Charlie Brumfield (inset: lower-right).

Their bread-and-butter comes from achieving a common goal, getting to and beating Swain.

Last year was not Swain's first impressive showing. In just his fourth pro stop, Swain claimed his first win in 1985, at age 17. Weeks later, Swain won the Ektelon National Championships and was consistently near the top ranking until

finally breaking through as No. 1 in 1989. Since his emergence, he has been considered one of the most gifted and natural talents on the tour.

Still, Swain's threat to Hogan's mass popularity is a tough challenge. Many believe Swain's slow-moving acceptance among racquetball's inner circles is an enigma. His deceptiveness, power and masterful shot making abilities make him

the most exciting player on the court and the game's only current bona fide star. Perhaps the racquetball world is reluctant to warm up to Swain just yet because no one knows when the boredom Hogan mentions will cause the 27-year-old to take another hiatus from the game as he did four years ago when a chance meeting with Boris Becker led to Swain's short-lived pro tennis career. The long shot quest was a no-win situation for Swain: racquetball fans and players felt snubbed; the few tennis enthusiasts who



were aware of Swain felt he was insulting the skill level of their sport.

Although the brief career change did not pan out, Swain no longer underestimates the breed of athletes with which he is now competing. "Racquetball players are much better athletes [than tennis players]," he claims. "I don't know how those guys look at themselves in the mirror. I



Left: Swain lunges for a tough backhand get against Californian John Ellis. Above: Swain captured in mid swing against Ohio's Doug Ganim.

can understand their wanting to make money, but if that's their goal — to make enough money to last all their lives — then once they've got it they should retire."

Being "set for life" is no longer a realistic goal for most racquetball players. Swain just signed endorsement contracts with Head Racquets and Head Shoes, but there is no marketing machine like the publicity campaigns that made Hogan a recognizable sports figure in mainstream America. (Just try to find a Cliff Swain poster out there. In the early eighties, every kid who owned a racquet had a bedroom wall adorned with a Smokin' Hogan poster.)

"Cliff deserves 10 times more attention than he's getting. Cliff deserves 10 times more money than he's getting," Hogan said. "He is carrying the banner of the pro tour. Right now, Cliff is the pro tour."

If and when racquetball regains its popularity of more than a decade ago, Swain should be ready to capitalize. He will not abandon his air of confidence, but after berating an official during a difficult and rare loss last year, he took his parents' advice and vowed not to tarnish his well-polished game with poor on-court etiquette.

"I don't think you have to be a bad guy in that way," he says. "I've had fans lately tell me they've enjoyed watching me play and they can feel my intensity. If they can feel that emotion from outside the

court, then win or lose, I'm happy."

And he would be happier still if pro racquetball continues its climb in public popularity and regains the attention, prestige and grandeur of the late seventies and early eighties. Then a broad-

er audience could join in the debate of Swain vs. Hogan, or Yellen, or Brumfield, or whoever. Finally, racquetball once again has something of interest to offer. If the opportunity is handled properly, the entire sport may have reason for a little swagger.

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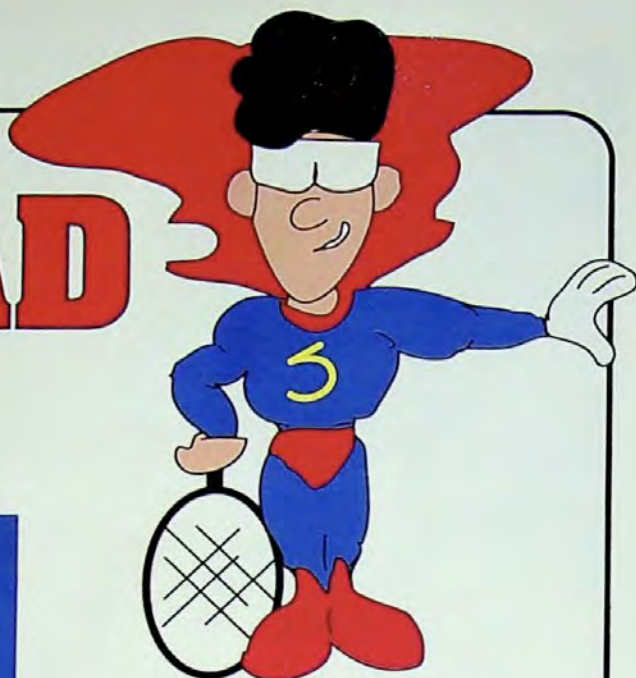
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HEAD ~~to~~ HEAD

Cliff Swain vs. the IRT

Cliff Swain	4	Andy Roberts	0
Cliff Swain	6	Tim Doyle	1
Cliff Swain	5	Drew Kachtik	1
Cliff Swain	7	Mike Guidry	1
Cliff Swain	0	Ruben Gonzalez	1
Cliff Swain	2	Mike Ray	0
Cliff Swain	3	Jack Newman	2



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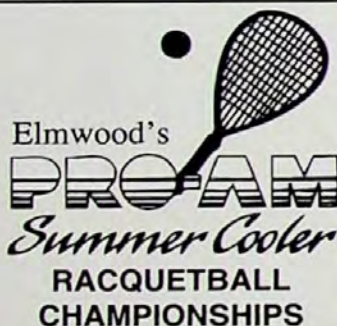
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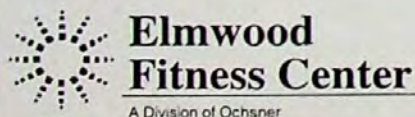
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Denver - Nov. 30 - Dec. 4
Lakewood Athletic Club
Contact: Marianne Alonzi (303) 989-5545

Dallas - Dec. 8 - 12
Landmark Athletic Club
VCI Challenge Series
Contact: Aaron Katz (214) 392-1500

IRT Satellite Events

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Contact: Adrian Webb (519) 748-5585

Sept. 23 - 25 - Kennewick, Washington
Invitational Tourney
Contact: Steve Wallenfels (509) 783-5465

Sept. 30 - Oct. 2 - Kansas City, Missouri
Top Gun
All-American Fitness
Contact: Jerry Ellis (816) 228-7600

Oct. 12 - 16 - Portland, Oregon
Multnomah Athletic Club
Contact: Hank Marcus (503) 639-3410

Oct. 28 - 30 - Whitby, Ontario
Contact: Adrian Webb (519) 748 - 5585

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Contact: Al Seitleman (516) 852-6616

Nov. 18 - 20 - Charleston, South Carolina
Charleston Air ForBase
Contact: Aki Moore (803) 878-2408

Nov. 25 - 27 - Ottawa, Quebec
Contact: Adrian Webb (519) 748 - 5585

For more information about satellite events
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Satellite Tour Director
International Racquetball Tour
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Runner Up - Tim Doyle



Anatom Bonus Pool
Winner - Mike Ray
Runner Up - Bret Harnett

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news from the hood

Bluegrass Games in Lexington

Junior RB a Big Hit in Syracuse

Racquetball in Syracuse is alive and well—due to the largest juniors program in central New York. The Track and Racquet Club holds its junior program every Tuesday at 4 o'clock. The ages of the players vary between five and eighteen years of age. PARI certified professional, and sometimes player on the IRT, Jeff Hanno, directs the program. The juniors work on skills along with their weekly practice games. The program has become so popular the juniors want to play twice a week.

Hanno's goal in working with the kids is to get players interested in a sport they can play for a lifetime.

"The future to our game is based on how many junior players we can motivate," says Hanno. "We have twenty or so

junior players in our program now and I can see it getting much bigger than that."

By looking at the numbers, its easy to see that Jeff Hanno is doing a fine job of motivating.

Syracuse juniors. First row, from left: Andrew Castle, Dan Klemperer, Adam Sarenski, Bobby Vinciguerra, Adam Goldberg, Max Greenky. Back row from left: Mike Loguidice, Tom Mazur, Randy Shayler, Seth Goldberg, Brett Ferguson, Dave Greenky, Scott Wickham, director Jeff Hanno. Unavailable for the photo: Dale Perry, Mike Karoleski, Cliff Maxeell, Kylie Drake, Finley Drake, Brian Berlin, and Ben Weinheimer.



Lexington, Kentucky hosted the Bluegrass State Games for 1994 with University of Kentucky's Seaton Center, YMCA of Central Kentucky, the Lexington Athletic Club, and the Lexington Sports Club, all donating court time for racquetball matches.

Winners:

Mens Open

Jimmy Lowe, Ron Simmons, Timothy Seitz

Womens Open

Marsha Berry, Teresa Parker, Melody Price

Men 19+

Eric Selby, Greg Short, Timothy Seitz

Men 30+

Carl Gatewood, Donnie Wood, Mark Shupe

Women 30+

Melody Price, Susan Richards, Shirley Barron

Men 40+

Ron Simmons, Jon Fleischaker, Donnie Wood

Men 50+

Randy Embry, Bill Mathews, Alan Kaplan

Men A

Mark Shupe, Delbert Terry, Larry Russell

Men B

Ron Marr, Jim Cannon, Neal Umberger

Men C

Bob Tillett, David Conkright, Alan Kaplan

Men D

K. Thornsberry, Brian Buchanan, Jeff Triplett

Men Novice

John Stout, David Shewmaker, Craig Nicholson

Men 18-

Josh Evans, Tony Kalmey, Chad Epperson

Multi-bounce

Steven Short, Brady Wood, Eric Russell

Law Enforcement Games

Law Enforcement personel shot it out this past August in Las Vegas Sporting House's 1994 Nevada Law Enforcement Games Racquetball Tournament. Here's the facts, Ma'am.

Men

Open

Gold	Bart Landsman	Los Angeles PD
Silver	Stan Hyt	Las Vegas Metro PD
Bronze	Gavin Henderson	Peoria PD

A Division

Gold	Bruce Smith	Salt Lake City PD
Silver	Octavio Duarte	US Border Patrol
Bronze	Michael Rhodes	Orange Co. DA's Office

B Division

Gold	Robert Winn	US Immigration
Silver	Daniel Milakovich	Upland PD
Bronze	Jerry Chapman	Los Angeles SO/Spouse

C Division

Gold	Shawn Fernandez	Alameda PD
Silver	Ernie Carrasco	Los Angeles SO
Bronze	Paul Bunnell	El Monte PD
Bronze	Ron Hall	Chicago PD

21-29

Gold	Steve Walton	Ontario PD
Silver	Douglas Reed	Ontario PD

30-34

Gold	Robert Winn	US Immigration
Silver	Shawn Fernandez	Alameda PD
Bronze	Chris Brackpool	Los Angeles SO

35-39

Gold	Bart Landsman	Los Angeles PD
Silver	Gavin Henderson	Peoria PD
Bronze	Paul Bunnell	El Monte PD

40-44

Gold	Dave Antonini	Phoenix PD
Silver	Bruce Smith	Salt Lake City PD
Bronze	Dennis Brown	Inglewood PD
Bronze	Ruben Sanchez	Los Angeles PD

45-49

Gold	Mike Visser	Rialto PD
Silver	Owen Lovell	Honolulu PD
Bronze	Michael Rhodes	Orange Co. DA's Office

50-54

Gold	Donald Cola	NLV Muni Court
Gold	Manny Rezentes	Honolulu PD
Gold	Elwin cooke	Culver City PD

Women

A Division

Gold	Kerr Smith	Bell Gardens PD
------	------------	-----------------

B Division

Gold	Tracy Van Raden	Gardena PD
Silver	Lorraine Fabela	CYA
Bronze	Paula Burns	Los Angeles SO

C Division

Gold	Gloria Baca	Albuquerque PD
Silver	Yolanda Matthews	Phoenix PD
Bronze	Linda Sena	Albuquerque PD

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Rules and Regulations for **BI RAK IT**, the IRT's Official Cross-Training Sport

The IRT has adopted BI RAK IT as its official cross training sport and interest around the country has grown as players and fans have witnessed matches at pro stops. Since the rules differ slightly from racquetball there has been some confusion about just how to play the game. The equipment consists of a racquet for each hand, with the racquet held in the non-dominant hand being slightly larger than the racquet used in the dominant hand. A right-handed player, then, would have a small racquet in his right hand, a slightly larger racquet in his left.

Facilities

Any one, three, or four-walled court

Types of Games

Singles, cutthroat, and doubles

Points

Points are scored by the player who wins the rally or serve. A point is lost if a player hits the ball into the backwall, uses a back-hand shot, "runs around" the ball in order to hit with the stronger side or strikes the ball with the inappropriate hand in the designated sides of the court (see diagram). A

game is won by the player who first reaches 15 points. A match is won by the player winning three out of five games.

Serves

To serve the ball, you must be in the service box. The ball must be bounced and the player is to hit the ball directly to the front wall so that the ball will then travel past the short service line and into the back court. The ball may hit one side wall after hitting the front wall. The hand executing the serve is to be alternated with each succeeding serve until service is lost. Upon regaining the service, the same sequence is to be followed. Furthermore, if one player falls behind in score by three points, this player is

required to designate the hand with which the leading player is to serve and continues to so designate as long as the difference in score is three points.

Faults

If the ball bounces in the front court



Two of the game's best,
**Ruben Gonzalez and
Woody Clouse.**

or service zone after hitting the front wall on the serve or if the ball travels to the back wall in the air, the serve is a fault. If the serve is with the inappropriate hand or if the foot of the server is out of the service box, the serve is a fault. A service fault results in a second try. Two faults result in a loss of service and a loss of point. If a serve does not directly reach the front wall, a loss of service and point occurs.

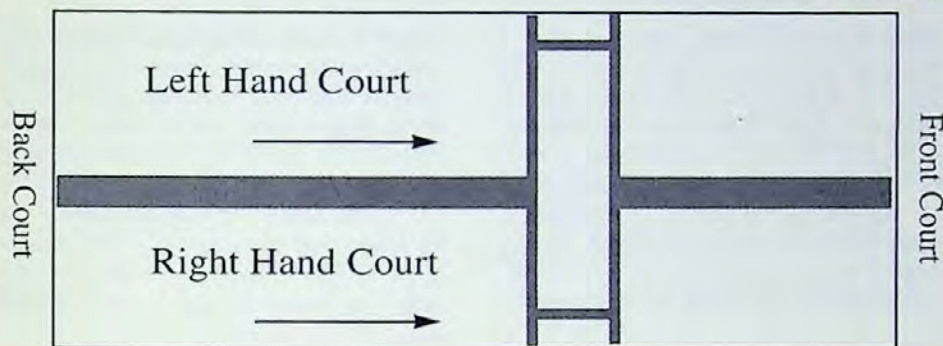
Hinders

Hinders are provided to maintain safety and fair play. After striking the ball the

player should virtually disappear to provide a clear shot to the front wall. A hinder is to be called and the point replayed when: there is a physical contact between players; when an opponent obstructs vision of or access to the ball; or when one player hits another with the ball. If the ball hits the player who hit the ball or a playing partner, the rally stops and the point is lost.



The IRT has adopted BIRAK IT as the Official Cross-Training Sport of the Tour. Above: Ruben Gonzalez and Cliff Swain. Middle row: Jack Newman, Mike Guidry, John Ellis, Jason Krickorian, Woody Clouse. Back row: Bret Harnett, Mike Ray.



The Man Behind the Game

Dr. Everett McCormick developed the idea of BIRAK IT. "I have had misgivings about traditional concepts that limit bilateral development of skills, and my concerns were intensified by medical training. Most forms of play actually restrict patterns of extremity use, but movements in almost any form of play can be mastered with either hand when circumstances demand."

Dr. McCormick designed the game to help overcome the reliance on the overtrained side -- and begin to enjoy the advantages of mix-handedness in other areas of life. There will be drawbacks. Having to fight longstanding adversaries of misunderstanding, inertia, and uncomfortable demands can be expected. Willingness to accept the challenge of change and exert sustained

effort will determine success.

The format for play in BIRAK IT reduces the likelihood of mismatches, requires more intense concentration, reduces fatigue as a major contributor to lost points and serves as a realistic basis for competition between men and women.

The dynamic use of all muscle groups on both sides of your body means better conditioning with greater stamina. Skills are developed bilaterally that will improve perception and performance in other sports.

Hank Marcus, Ruben Gonzalez, Woody Clouse, Mike Ray, Dr. Everett McCormick in 1992.



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Rotator Rehab

Dealing with shoulder injuries

By Fran Davis

While playing a tournament in May of this year, I was making a beautiful diving get when I felt an ominous "snap" in my shoulder. I knew something was wrong when my shoulder began stiffening. Soon I couldn't even lift my arm without pain. Even after icing it all day, the pain became progressively worse.

Since the Peninsula Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Center is located at the

What A Racquet Club where I train, I checked the next day with a Certified Athletic Trainer named Kevin Brown about the injury. After some questioning, he advised me that it was probably a rotator cuff strain or tear. I began treatments of ice and massage as part of a conservative rehabilitation program and began to start making preparations for some down time. Unfortunately that meant missing compet-

ing in the amateur nationals in Houston. After a second opinion from an orthopedic surgeon who diagnosed a non-surgical tear of the rotator cuff, I was well on my way to learning all about this special group of muscles and how to expedite their repair.

I remembered from **KILLSHOT** that the rotator cuff was a group of four muscles in the shoulder that are often broken down with overuse and sometimes tear as a result

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Photo by John Foust

of a series of small injuries or one acute injury (**KILLSHOT** # 11, September/October 1993). Sure enough, I had experienced some pain in my biceps and triceps and general discomfort in my shoulder leading up to the tournament. Because I had just moved to the west coast in January and wanted to be visible in my new location, I had added more tournaments and practices to my already busy clinic and camp schedule. The dive was the straw that broke the camel's back. Since I also remembered that using rest alone without clinically monitored massage and appropriate exercise would cause the shoulder to stiffen and freeze, I knew I had some work to do.

Since rehab from this type of injury requires professional assistance and must be individualized based on age, level of conditioning, and severity of injury, I cannot give you a "how-to" instructional. I can however give you a "what-to" expect outline based on my work with Kevin. I do know that it works. I can't wait to be back on the courts full-time completely free of pain and with my regular shot velocity restored!

What the rotator cuff does

A. Primary (most important) functions involve assisting in the overall stability of the ball & socket structure. Through muscle tone and voluntary contractions, these muscles collectively pull the ball portions of the humerus into the socket of the scapula.

B. Secondary functions involve elevating the arm and rotating the arm into various positions relative to the body.

The rotator cuff's role in racquetball

A. On forehand ceiling shots and overhead passes, the cuff guides your arm to where you perceive the ball to be while you move the racquet forward with great power. It contracts to hold the joint stable at impact, countering any shearing forces from the racquet.

B. The most vigorous of its functions involves decelerating the arm rotator directly after impact on those same shots.

Rehabilitating a rotator cuff injury

A. The anti inflammatory phase - (from a few days to a couple of weeks) ice, immobilization, prescribed medication (such as Motrin, Indocin, Naprosyn, etc.), and possibly ultrasound, massage, and/or electrical stimulation.

B. Range of motion and flexibility phase - stretching the muscles, tendons, and ligaments around the ball and socket

C. Strength training Phase - begin by slowly stabilizing the scapula then on to strengthening the rotator cuff, followed by a gradual return to regular upper body resistance training and hitting balls



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Using Mental Imagery in Racquetball

Imagine That!

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by Del Villanueva

Head Coach, University of California - Davis

Imagery is a process by which one recalls past successful performances/experiences so one can program his/her mind and body to duplicate it consistently (and more spontaneously). It can bring on significant changes in performance, physically refines the precision of movement, and economizes energy consumption.

The use of imagery helps decrease psychological blocks and increases enjoyment of exercise by helping the player focus and stay relaxed. During imagery, some athletes recall and rehearse the kinesthetic cues (body feelings) that accompany the activity. He essentially trains himself to spontaneously "think" with his muscles.

The body follows the mind's suggestions; our entire motor nervous system is geared to a whole visual signal (what you see and what you conceptualize). Using imagery to visualize and "feel" the result you want will make your body do its best to comply.

Recall a time you played extremely well and could do nothing wrong! Now, picture yourself flowing...

1. Recall the "charge" you were experiencing, and the "pumped" state it fostered. Think about where you carried this feeling (chest, head, thighs, shoulders, etc.)

2. Recall the sights you noticed when you were playing well.

If you checked and touched your strings between points, did it help you concentrate?

Did you find yourself looking at the ball more during strokes and between points? Did your constant focus on the ball

help keep you intense and less distracted?

Did it feel good to play for the crowd?

Were you oblivious to the sights, which is perhaps what kept you on an "even keel" and focused?

3. Do you remember any sounds during this peak performance (especially any sounds that were rhythmic and kept you focused)?

...the cracking or popping sound of the ball hitting the front wall as you continued to rip shots with sheer delight

...the sound of even, though somewhat labored breathing, providing a faint though significant beat for you

...most of us dwell on physical preparation and hope all other things fall into place.

4. When playing well, you are usually moving well.

Do you remember the low profile (knees bent) you kept to the floor which prepared you for cat-like springing movements while waiting for your shot, ultimately allowing you to cover the court?

Picture your almost unconscious relocation to center court after every shot. This home base instinct has given you the upper hand at optimum positioning and

allowed you to prepare yourself earlier to return shots with impeccable timing.

5. Recall the smooth strokes that enabled you to execute crisp killshots and blow passes by your opponent with authoritative control. Imagine/feel yourself completing those same strokes from start to finish as you desire.

6. Finally, how did it feel to have the poise, concentration and presence to play one point at a time?

When practicing imagery, you will have to learn to read your individual cues and arousal mechanisms, and use the ones that are most effective. Only you can determine how you perceive situations and store cues that enable you to experience the situation over and over again, totally removed from when and where it happened. Memories are made of this stuff, allowing you to consult your mind's eye again and again to relive situations recorded there.

The problem with racquetball, or any other sport for that matter, is that most of us dwell on physical preparation and hope all other things fall into place. Try the many forms of mental conditioning and preparation such imagery and watch your performance improve and become more meaningful. Remember, though, mental skills must be practiced and be as methodical as your physical practice. Soon, you will develop a capacity for spontaneity to mentally condition yourself.

So go ahead, recall the past, hit the courts, and once again invite yourself to play out of your mind.

Back to School!

By Aaron Katz

Special!

Grading the Pros

1993-94

After the biggest and richest season the Men's Professional Racquetball tour has ever experienced, it seems appropriate to provide the pros with report cards to sum up last year's efforts and set goals for the new season. The grades are based on consistency, improvement, and whether or not they met their expectations. I'll also use whatever skills I have picked up from the Psychic Channel and prognosticate what lies ahead for the pros.

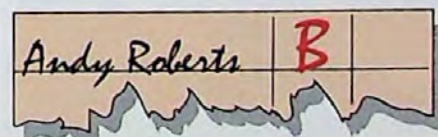


What can you say about Cliff that hasn't already been said? In an effort to promote the other players on the tour, Cliff has not received the recognition he deserves for the incredible season he put together. He totally dominated the tour,



proved he could win with several different styles and brought his game to a level the sport of racquetball has never before seen. To put it in perspective, Cliff won as many tournaments this year alone as Mike Yellen won cumulatively in the five years he was National Champion.

What can Cliff do as an encore? I'm not sure, but there is no sign of anyone unseating him in the near future. Look for another big season out of Cliff as he replaces Hogan as the greatest to ever play the game, on his way to his third consecutive national title.



Another consistent solid season out of Andy. Injury problems caused him to miss some tournaments, but he firmly estab-

lished himself as the best of the rest; however, he did lose some ground to Cliff, with whom he had pretty good success prior to this season. Andy overcame a string of disappointing early season losses to Guidry to put together an outstanding second half.

Next season: first and foremost he needs to get his injured knee well, he is probably the only one ready mentally to take a run at Cliff. However, he would have to really improve his mobility to do so. Look for Andy to have an even better season (if healthy) next year as he uses the off season to take his game to the next level.



A definite breakthrough season for



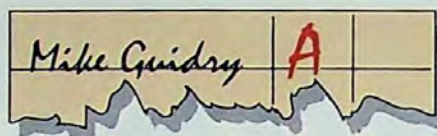
Tim, who finally found the consistency and confidence that has eluded him in previous seasons. His off court training has really paid off both physically and mentally. However, he still seems to have a mental block against Cliff and Andy, and the road to #1 goes through both of them. He will have to improve his court game and shot selection to consistently beat those two.

Next season: another solid season for Tim, still probably a year or so away from making a run at the National title, but his hard work and dedication continue to pay off.



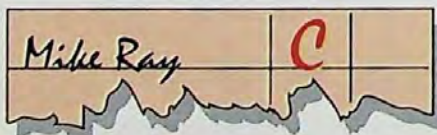
Drew kind of slopped through another season, showing some glimpses of the form that led him to the National title in 1992, but overall was mostly a disappointment. Drew's mental toughness and consistency kept him in the quarters and semis but he only won one tournament and appeared in two finals. He has yet to beat Cliff.

Next season: Drew needs to discover *Slimfast* over the summer and get in shape. There are too many good young players coming up for Drew to continue to have the success he has had without getting in better shape. My crystal ball says he will get recommitted and make a legitimate run at the #2 spot and regain some of the fire from 1992.



After a relatively stagnant second year on the tour Mike definitely elevated himself to the next level and established himself as a top five player. Still plagued by some shot selection problems, however Mike has learned to use his superior speed and re-killing ability as one of the most unique weapons on the tour. Difficulty with the new style of play was prevalent in losses to John Ellis and Sudsy Monchik.

Next season: Mike definitely needs to work on his serve and return of serve to jump to the next level. In addition, he must learn to play the power players with more confidence. If he does this, the sky is the limit for this immensely talented young player. His reckless disregard for his body may create some injury problems, but he has been fortunate in this regard to date.

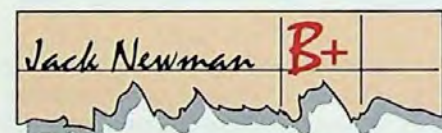


This has to qualify as the most disappointing season for Mike in several years. After winning Montreal, Mike failed to return to another final. He was defeated soundly every time he played Tim Doyle whom he had dominated the year before. Mike had several round of 16 and quarter-



final defeats.

Next season: Mike needs to build on his semifinal at the World championships where he defeated Guidry in the quarters. Mike's total control style can still win on the tour if he believes it can. At times Mike seemed to lose confidence as he tried to get more aggressive in order to adapt to the more modern power game. Mike is a tremendous competitor and usually is at his best when everyone counts him out, as they are now. Look for Mike to make a run at the top Five next season.

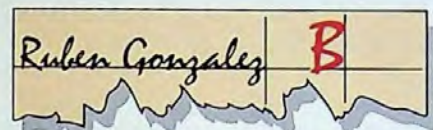


Jack definitely had his best season as a pro, picking up the second victory of his



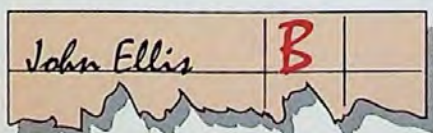
career and he was the only player to defeat Cliff more than once (he did it twice). However, some disappointing losses combined with the birth of his first child may bring an end to a career that has spanned over a decade. Jack is still the only player to win a junior national title, intercollegiate title, Open National title and a pro stop.

Next season: Jack will make an outstanding stockbroker even if the market stays bear.



The grandfather of the IRT still amazes everyone with his speed and ability to compete with those often half his age. At 41, Reuben did not show any demonstrable drop in his level of play and pulled off some early season upsets. A consistent top 8 finisher, lets hope for the sport's sake that Reuben continues to play at his current level a couple of years longer.

Next season: There are a lot of new young lions coming up and the game has gotten so physical that is difficult for Reuben to make it through an entire tournament, but he will still pull off some upsets. However, this might be Reuben's first season out of the top 8 since he started the tour. (Nobody hopes I am wrong more than I do).



John is the most talented young player to come up in a long time. He had some



great tournaments and showed flashes of brilliance, however never put together a real consistent run of tournaments. He has all the tools to challenge the top players and will do so in time.

Next season: Look for John to become more consistent and establish himself as a top 8 player, though his lack of success against the top three may prevent him from breaking into the top four. However, his power style of play is definitely where the future of the pro game is.

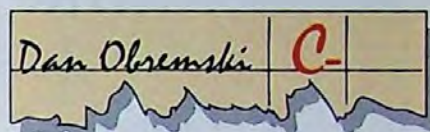


Woody once again flirted with some big wins but was unable to pull them out. Several early round defeats in the mid to later part of the season seemed to damage his confidence. Woody really needs to work on his pinch shots and court position-



ing to make a run at the top 8 which he has the talent to do.

Next season: it is up to Woody. He has moved up only nominally the past several years and there is more competition than ever.



Dan's self imposed exile from the tour led to a very disappointing season. Dan had some good tournaments but did not demonstrate the desire to be a top player. He has all the tools but as the years go by, it seems less likely that he will put them all together.

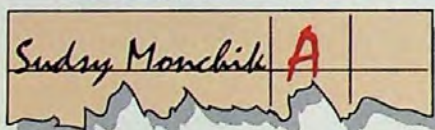
Next season: Dan needs to get off the fence. He has the game to be a top player but this part time stuff is not going to cut it. As the lottery slogan says, "You got to be in it to win it."



Bret's recent signing with Eliminator racquets seemed to inject some new life into him, but some inconsistent late season play still has the jury out on the possibility of a successful comeback. He still seems to have a hard time adjusting to the new style power game which was once his forte.

Next season: If Bret makes it through the whole season (which seems unlikely based on the past couple of seasons) he

might return to his old form, but it would seem doubtful. His desire will be the key ingredient to monitor.



Sudsy is the most exciting young player to come up in a long time. This brash, trash talking punk is a product of the MTV generation and an absolute joy to watch. He has the talent and personality to be the sport's next superstar. If Sudsy is willing to pay his dues he has a natural pro style game and hits his backhand harder than anyone in the sport.

Next season: Look for Sudsy to break into the top ten with some big wins and inject a lot of excitement to the IRT Tour.



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ASSERTIVENESS

**INSTRUCTIONAL
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Do you make the choices to "press" or "play it safe" appropriately? Are your decisions in the course of a match based on sound thinking with regard to your own abilities, and those of your opponent, or are they based on a compulsion to overkill or a hesitance to go for it? The assertive racquetball player knows his strengths, makes good decisions, and takes calculated risks, regardless of outside factors.

As healthy assertiveness increases to the extreme, it becomes an over-aggressive hostility that has all too often been the earmark of extremely motivated athletes. If you find you lose several rallies on skips, become angry over every disagreement, constantly give yourself negative self programming, or seem to have more than your share of physical contact and broken racquets, you probably need some work to become assertive rather than hostile. Develop a ritual to quickly cool-off. Think through situations to avoid anger. Recognize your own good shots to keep the bad ones in context and less dramatic.

At the other end of the spectrum, the extreme version of lack of assertiveness is what psychologists term learned-helplessness to describe the athlete that will often lose out of intimidation. If you find yourself allowing your opponent to dictate the pace of play, are distracted by your opponent's temper or comments during a match, yield to avoid any disagreement over a call, or opt for a "safe" shot due to lack of confidence, you probably need some work to become more assertive. Try some solo practice to build confidence. Work on center court positioning to stay in the action then gradually gain control of it. Practice mentally jumping into action and out of a passive rut. Practice concentration to play through distraction.

Let's assume you fall within the two extremes, you might improve your scoring ability by increasing your assertiveness in these situations:

1) You are setting the trap for a quick opponent with a weak backhand by pulling him to the backhand side then shooting down the forehand line. You may be inclined to fear his quickness and seek too much of a margin of safety by going back

to the backhand again and again. The more assertive plan would be to effectively pull him well to the backhand side with one good shot, then immediately trip the trap by going for the forehand pass.

2) You find yourself in a ceiling ball rally. Since you fear the back wall and shooting from deep court, you may be tempted to go back to the ceiling too many times. The more assertive choice would be to watch for your opponent's slightest weak shot, then shoot for the winner.

3) You are in a fast rally with lots of shots going down the middle. Since you love the set ups and look so good waiting for them and then wailing away, you just can't resist stepping way back and letting fly. The more assertive approach may sometimes be to hit from the open stance to cut off the ball and take advantage of your opponent's poor position, rather than

surrender the center.

4) You are in deep court with a plum. You sense victory and want to crush the ball for the most awesome kill in the history of the sport. You're salivating so much with anticipation that you hardly noticed that your opponent is easily far forward enough to effectively cover all but the flat-test of rolls. Chilling just a bit of over-aggressiveness will save you from the skip and alert you to the opportunity for the more assertive and far more intelligent pass.

Get the idea? Assertiveness means closing out the rally instead of being lulled into the endless rally or taking yourself out of the rally. It means confronting your own hostility or complacency to become truly effective. The tough part is that assertiveness requires true confidence. True confidence requires practice. So what are you



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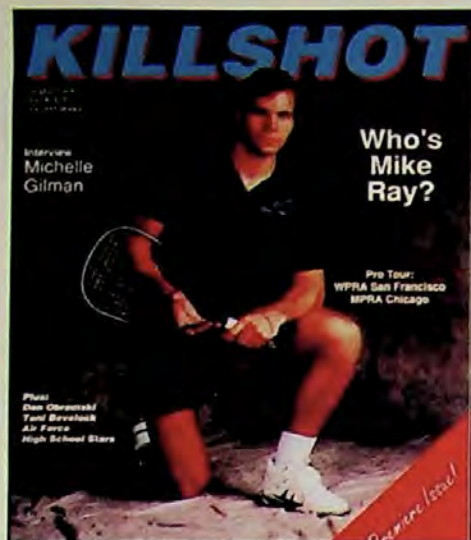
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Ladies and Gentlemen, Larry has Left the Building

The Winning Racquetball Tradition at Memphis State

By Kelly Kerr

Tradition. Winning. Elvis. These are just a few of the words that can be heard around the Memphis State University (soon to be the University of Memphis) campus. These people aren't talking about football, basketball, or tennis. When these words come up it means that someone is talking about the MSU racquetball team. In the racquetball world the words Memphis State are synonymous with collegiate racquetball, and when combined they represent a history of total domination.

The racquetball program at Memphis State was started in 1974 by Geddes Self. Then in 1976, long-time racquetball enthusiast and current head coach Larry Liles took over. The team began by racking up title after title and soon was in the process of creating a winning record that has not been matched by any other school in any other sport. Although unconfirmed, rumor has it that Memphis State's 15 straight national championships should have its place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

However, in the last couple of years MSU has found itself in a strange place—not first. As a result of a strong team from Southwest Missouri State, MSU has had to take the back seat for the past few seasons. The great thing about Memphis State is that you can never count them out. Isn't that what tradition is all about; the ability to produce a championship team with whatever talent you can muster? The team certainly has the talent.

Like Memphis, the racquetball team has an international flavor. The team features: Fabian Balmori, the current Central American Games singles champion from Venezuela, Kelly Kerr, the current



Canadian junior singles and doubles champion, Luis Munoz, the current Central American Games doubles champion from Mexico, Alex Rodriguez, former Mexican junior champ, and Hernan Suarez, a member of the Bolivian National Team. The rest of the men's team consists of Americans Scott Reiff, member of the U.S. National Team, and Andy Yambrek, former member of the U.S. Junior Team. The women's team consists of Kerri Stoffregen, current collegiate champ, Britt Engel, former world junior champion, and Stacy Elliot, collegiate runner-up. The diversity of the MSU team makes it a really fun and unique atmosphere in which to be. It also says a lot about the program when you have players coming from five or six different countries to play. Along with the strength of the program, there is an abundance of great tournaments in the area which is another big reason why players seem to flock to Memphis State.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the Memphis State program is its longevity. The team has seen so many great players, many of whom are now on the top of the International Racquetball Tour rankings; Andy Roberts, Jack Newman, Todd O'Neil, David Simmonete, Mike Engle, Brian Rankin, and current players such as

Scott Reiff. How has Memphis State endured for so many years, especially during the times when racquetball was struggling? The biggest reason is the hard work that is put in by head coach Larry Liles and head of the MSU Roll-out Club, Jack Fulton. As MSU's #1 player Scott Reiff notes, "The program here would be nothing without Coach Liles and Jack. They spend countless hours trying to find sponsors and making arrangements for the team to

travel to tournaments."

Trying to fund the team is not getting any easier. In fact, Coach Liles sees that as the biggest roadblock that he faces each season, "A lot of thrill has gone out of the program because of expensive travel and lack of funding for the program." The team certainly has its supporters though. One of the most notable is Robert Conklin, owner of the Audabon Cafe who provides several team members with jobs and a place to eat whenever they get hungry. In fact, the Audabon has become a part of the racquetball team. It is a place where everybody goes after practice to hang-out before going home.

The college racquetball scene is definitely in a time of change and advancement. More schools are starting programs and several of these will soon be offering scholarships. If history has any power over the future, Memphis State will continue to be a force in college play as it continues to recruit new players. Regardless of what the future holds for Memphis State, its place in history is secure, and the name will be known in racquetball for generations to come.

Oh, just in case you're wondering what Elvis had to do with the racquetball team, Coach Liles was his personal coach.

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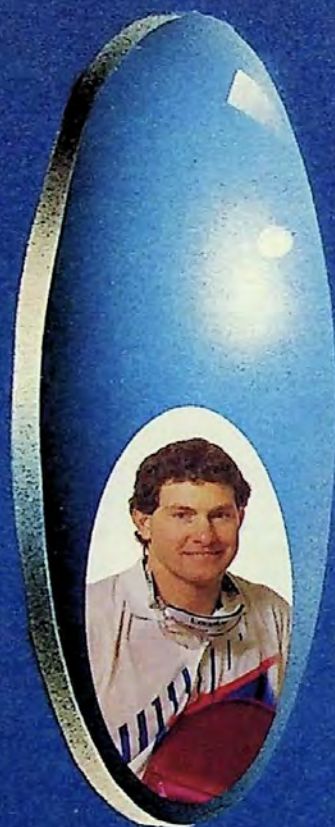


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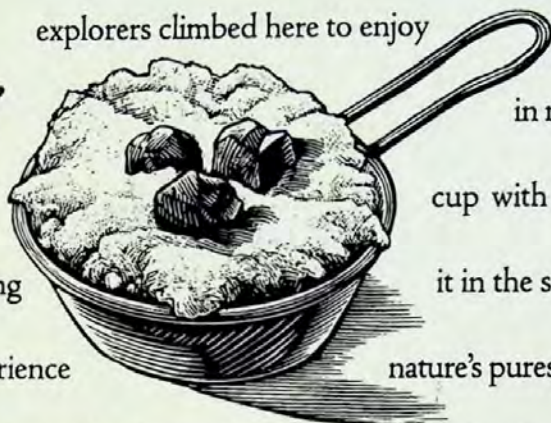
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