

National Racquetball®

Vol. 10 No. 11
December 1981
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THE COMEBACK OF RICHARD WAGNER

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On the cover . . .

Richard Wagner, veteran touring pro, is this
month's cover story. Turn to page 6 for the
interesting feature on Wagner's rise, fall and
rise again in the pro ranks.



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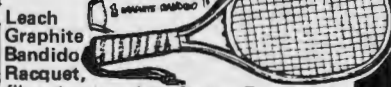
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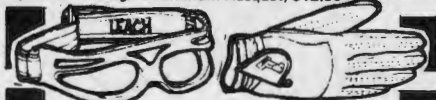


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From the Editor . . .

The Case For Lessons...

Have you heard this one lately? *"The mistake we made was promoting racquetball as a sport that is easy to learn."*

It's popular happy hour talk in racquetball's business circles. Those who hold this theory are people bemoaning the fact their business is down as the growth of racquetball slows according to its natural evolutionary curve. And the same people aim to do something about it.

Their plan goes like this. Begin an industry-wide sales effort built around the "new" theory, i.e., racquetball is *not* easy to learn, but rather you need a good, solid series of lessons in order to truly enjoy the game. False and true, in that order.

False, in that no matter what anybody tells you, racquetball is easy to learn. That fact, and that alone, is the primary reason for our sport's meteoric rise in popularity during the 1970's. Had it not been so, we would not have grown from the handful of players in 1968 to the six to 10 million (depending on who you believe) today.

The theory is true in the sense that although easy to learn, if you really want to obtain full enjoyment of your first few months on the court (and therefore keep your interest and excitement in the game at a peak), you must take lessons.

Why, you ask, if the game is so easy, must I spend the time and money taking lessons?

A friend of mine is keen on the following phrase: *"In the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king."* Simply stated, if you're a beginning player (less than two years experience) and have never taken lessons, then you are one of the blind. If you've taken lessons, then you're the one-eyed man.

Lessons will do two things for you. First and foremost, it will give you an understanding of the sport, the way it is meant to be played, the concepts, theory and proper strokes. This will help you avoid injury to yourself and (more often) injury caused by you to your opponent.

Secondly, lessons will enable you to improve at an even faster rate than those who disdain lessons because "racquetball is so easy." And the faster your rate of improvement, the better workout you'll get, the more fun you will have, and the more "hooked" you'll be on the sport.

Injury can be a real turn-off to racquetball. And one person's injury can affect many players, most of whom were nowhere in sight when the injury



occurred. Word of mouth travels fast and like the pyramid schemes of a year or two ago, it reaches many people in a short period of time.

Lessons should virtually eliminate injuries to beginners. I have always played by two rules: offensively, when in doubt—don't swing. I call my hinder and save my opponent's face. Defensively, when in doubt—get out of the way. That's where I save my own mug.

Sure, I've lost a few rallies along the way. Maybe even a match or two. But I never lost an opponent, or friend on the court. I never felt the guilt of knocking out a nice guy's teeth. Since I'm just a lousy B player having fun, no match is worth either risk to me.

Call it court etiquette, racquetball theory or just plain common sense. It should be taught in every first lesson and nobody should ever step onto a racquetball court without being totally dedicated to the concept.

It stands to reason that if racquetball is so easy to play, that the rate of one's improvement should be rapid. It is. Once you learn the bounce, the walls and the fundamental shots, you're on your way. But if you combine the natural improvement that almost all experience, with the learned improvement from a solid lesson program, your skill increase will be much greater, providing all the additional benefits of which we speak.

My message to those who want to pretend that racquetball is difficult is *"forget it."* People won't buy it, literally. Rather, convince the doubters with fact, logic and results.

I'll say it again: racquetball is easy to learn. To play racquetball properly and well is not easy. Your degree of enjoyment is directly proportionate to your level of skill. And your level of skill is directly related to your instruction.

Now let's see, when I move into my backhand ready position . . .

Chuck Fave



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Getting Straight: The Comeback of Richard Wagner



March 28, 1976, Buffalo, NY. Richard Wagner, 20, waving his first place prize money check, is beaming from ear to ear, having just won his first professional racquetball tour stop, only the sixth player in history to do so. He's on top of his game and those who know are comparing him to another fast rising youngster, Marty Hogan, who Wagner defeated en route to his title.

June 3, 1980, Las Vegas. Richard Wagner, 24, wanders aimlessly from casino to casino, seeking alcoholic refuge from his dismal racquetball performance. For the first time in his racquetball career, he has lost in the first round of the Nationals. His game and psyche are at a low ebb after one of the worst seasons any top pro has ever had.

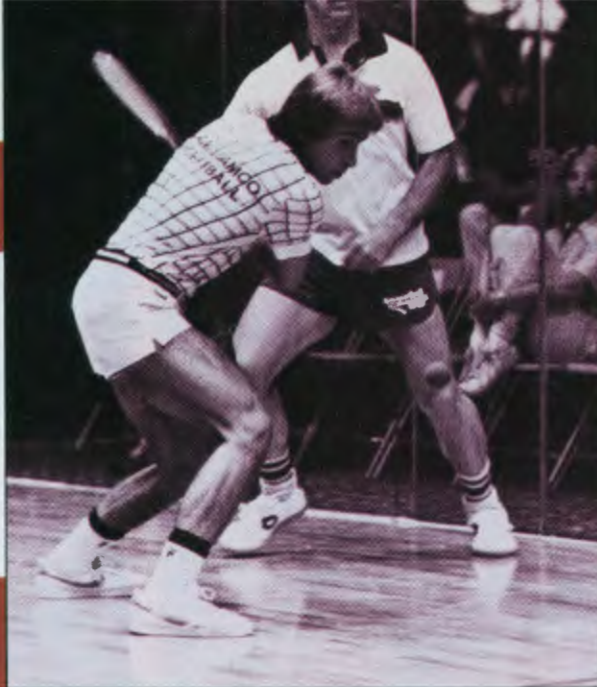
In four years, Richard Wagner had gone from top to bottom on the pro racquetball circuit. His life was beset with personal, emotional and financial troubles. His game was terrible, his ranking dropped out of the top 20, and his sponsorship was lost. Those same sages who had predicted greatness, were now orating Wagner's eulogy. He was through.

Wagner remembers well that 1979-80 racquetball season.

"I got beat in every tournament, by everybody. I just got beat, beat, beat. It was terrible. And to make it worse, I drank. I drank a lot. I'd be on the court more worried about boozing than about winning.

"I took a lot out on my wife and kid. I

Extra power comes with extra effort. In this match against Mike Yellen, Wagner's forehand actually lifts him off the ground.



The proper backhand form, plus eye contact, show Wagner about to strike a cross court pass. Changing his stroke changed his game—for the better. Mark Morrow was the opponent this day.

blamed them. I blamed anybody except myself for what was happening to me. But it wasn't them at all because they're good people. It was just a year I'd like to erase from my memory bank."

Today Richard Wagner has come back. In the first four tour stops of the 1981-82 season, Wagner has reached the quarter-finals three times, all losses to Marty Hogan and the finals once. He no longer hits the bottle. He's back with Joan, his ex-wife and Rickie, his son. He's got a few bucks in the bank and he eagerly looks forward to the next tour stop.

Wagner's racquetball career parallels the professional game. How and why his roller coaster has careened to such degrees indicates the passions that make the man. Since 1970, when at age 14 he first hit a racquetball, the sport has consumed his life, except for that one erasable year.

"Man, I could play forever," he says. "Back in Paterson (home town-Paterson, New Jersey) I'd play four, five, six hours a day. My one goal was to be the best player at the Paterson YMCA. When I learned about pro racquetball, I wanted to be the best at that. I wanted to beat Serot, Keeley, Brumfield and all the others I read about."

Eventually he did. Upon high school graduation, he took his 3.4 grade point average to the University of San Diego, and like scores of other would be racquetball phenoms, sought the ultimate greatness that racquetball's mecca seemed to promise.

In those early years of racquetball, San Diego was the place to be. If you were a player of any caliber, that's where you lived. Beginning with Bud Muehleisen and Charlie Brumfield, were added Steve

Keeley, Steve Serot, Steve Strandemo and the kid called Hogan. Plus many others never heard of or from. Wagner has become one of the survivors.

Admitting he went to USD to play racquetball, Wagner quickly found out that books and tournaments are a tough mix. Each event, he'd bring the books. Each event, he'd never open them. He made progress, but is still 45 hours from his business degree.

It was 1974, quite an exciting time for racquetball. Court clubs were beginning to surface; the number of participants was rising at unheard of levels; and the first full pro racquetball season was about to open, not surprisingly, with politics right in the middle.

1974, the year of the split tour, found Wagner debuting in professional play. The two competing national governing bodies (International Racquetball Association and National Racquetball Club) each had about half the top players. Wagner played the NRC tour.

"I was lucky," he says. "I only had to play half the field. I got good experience against some great players. My first tournament, I got beat by Serot."

Steve Serot, at the time racquetball's second ranked player, who with Keeley made up the one-two punch of the NRC tour, was long an idol of Wagner's.

"When I first heard about pro racquetball, I learned about Serot," he says. "Serot was 16-years-old and number two. It was right then that I decided that someday I would beat him."

It didn't happen at that first meeting, a 21-6, 21-11 wipe-out in Oceanside, California. But Wagner tasted the cake, and he liked it on his palate. He contin-

ued his untiring workouts. And in the next two pro events he went to the quarter-finals each time. When the two tours came together in January of 1975, Wagner was there, upsetting Jerry Hilecher in the 16's and giving Brumfield, the game's dominant player, a run for his money in the quarters.

And between each event he would play these same top pros, getting walloped each day, but learning just the same.

"You've got to play players better than yourself," he says. "That's the only way to really improve, to measure your game. When I first came to San Diego I'd play all of them, and lose 21-1, 21-0 in practice. But I hustled and I tried, and I improved."

"Now, I play Hogan, Don Thomas and other top pros two or three times a week. On the other days I play top A players, so I can play hard and still work on shots."

A turning point in Wagner's racquetball life came when Hogan captured his first pro win, in Burlington, Vermont in the fall of 1975. The fact that Hogan, just a year younger than he, could win a tournament, spurred Wagner to work even harder.

"After that tournament I came home and practiced and practiced for four weeks. I felt embarrassed that I had never won a pro tour stop. Then I did it."

Did he ever! Hogan went down to defeat 21-8, 18-21, 11-10 in the semi-finals, and Bill Schmidtke in the championship match, 20-21, 21-15, 11-6, in Buffalo.

Richard Wagner was on top of the world. He had beaten them all. He was king of the hill.

It would be nice if the story ended there—but it doesn't.

Three months later, the 1976 National Championships found Wagner a second round loser to Jeff Bowman, fringe pro, the type of player Wagner should eat up in a major tournament early round.



As Steve Keeley moves in, Wagner puts away a forehand drop shot. He rarely uses the shot any more, claiming, "you can't push the ball, you've got to hit it."

"The pressure got to me," says Wagner. "I expected to win. Everybody expected me to win. I put a tremendous amount of pressure on myself. I played terribly and he played well. That's what happens."

At the time, the loss to Bowman seemed like a quirk, one of those things that happens in professional sports. The next two seasons, ('76-'77 and '77-'78) were good years, but didn't hold the greatness that Wagner so expected.

Inconsistency plagued his game. He'd reach the semi-finals one month, and go out early the next. He'd blow-out players one month, and lose to them the next. And at the same time, Hogan was emerging as the greatest of all time.

Racquetball and Marty Hogan became synonymous. In a two year span Hogan won 17 of 21 tournaments he entered. Players finding their way to Hogan's side of the draw would make airline reservations home for the day they were scheduled to play him.

What did Wagner feel, as his contemporary tore through the tour?

"Well, at first there was some jealousy," says Wagner. "But now, I really admire Hogan, for the accomplishments and the way he's done it. It would be easy to be jealous, but I'm really not."

"There are some good, young players today coming up at the same time—Scott Hawkins, John Egerman and Brett Harnett. But Harnett's the one who's caught fire, who's gone to the finals, who people are calling the 'next Hogan.' The others still like him, but I know they feel, 'Wow, why did Harnett do it and not me? Why is it happening to him?' That's the way I felt about Hogan."

But Wagner continued his pursuit, reaching a number two ranking in January of 1979, with Hogan clearly in his scope. The kid from Paterson, without much power, without a picture-book swing, and without the big name, took aim on Marty Hogan at the Tournament of Champions, in Coral Gables, Florida at the season's second most important event.



Top professional play takes concentration and fundamentals. Here Wagner shows both as he prepares to rip a forehand against former national champ Charlie Brumfield.



When things were going bad, the shouting on the court would come from Wagner, here shown in one of those, "How could you have made that call, ref?" situations.

"It's hard to explain how I felt in January of '79," he says. "I mean, I lived and died racquetball. My game was up, I was up, I really thought I could catch Hogan. On the other hand I was having doubts about the future of pro racquetball. Politics were everywhere—and I mean everywhere. The tour hadn't progressed like I had hoped, and I worried if pro racquetball would even make it."

Wagner went to the finals at the T of C where he lost to Hogan. But he lost much more than just a match. He lost his fragile hold on desire and confidence. Not that Hogan beat him badly, the match was well-played and close. It was off the court that Wagner was beaten.

"My sponsor was rooting against me in the gallery," he said. "Actually cheering for Hogan to beat me. I was just a kid, particularly emotionally, and I couldn't handle it. I was devastated. I understand it better now, but back then I couldn't. And when I got four bad calls from the referee in the tie-breaker, well, I guess I broke."

From then on, each tournament got worse. Coupled with this was his nagging doubt about the future of pro racquetball. Where were the bright lights, national

television and big money of which starry-eyed kids like Wagner dream?

Wagner gave up. He lost interest, quit working at his game. He decided that it wasn't worth the effort, that he didn't care. He turned his back on his entire life.

"Racquetball has been good to me," says Wagner. "I have no regrets. But when you have a dream, then half a dream, then no dream at all, it gets you down."

All the way down to the first round loss to Bowman in the National Championships of 1980. A shoulder injury, booze, an automobile wreck, and the Bowman defeat left his ranking below untested rookies and he lost his sponsorship. This was the low point for Richard Wagner—June, 1980.

"I know everybody wrote me off," he says. "But I talked it out with Joan. I got counseling and stopped drinking. And that summer (1980) I worked my tail off. I played racquetball four-five hours a day. I ran, I lifted weights, I swam, I got back into it. I changed my stroke to develop more power. I was determined to prove myself again."

Racquetball comebacks are not easy. Some of the best have been unable to capture lost magic, Serot being one. Wagner's incentive was personal.

"I wanted to show those ———," he said. "I worked out harder each day than the day before. It was vengeance. I knew what everybody was saying about me, that I couldn't handle it, that I was washed up, that I left my kill shot at the bottom of a Michelob."

And Wagner showed them. Playing with a new-found consistency, he battled back from the neverland of un-ranked players to a number seven position by season's end. His victories included nearly every top player save Hogan, and the season culminated with his being named the NRC's Comeback Player the Year.

"Sure, I'm proud of the award," he says. "But I'll tell you, coming back, was a lot tougher than going down. The game has changed, the players are better and there's more of them. The ball's slower and the players hit harder. And many of the old faces are gone. Today's players barely heard of Brumfield, Keeley or Serot. They grew up in the Hogan era and they all patterned their style after Hogan."

Hogan. The nemesis for every top pro. Wagner's current season of three quarter-final losses to Hogan and a championship round loss to Dave Peck add up to four straight solid performances.

His game is guts, desire, determination and effort. Speed is still his biggest fun-



The Wagners circa 1978.

damental attribute and he has no glaring weakness. He's gotten himself straight and he's enjoying life a lot more.

He's back with Joan and she's expecting their second child in Spring, 1982. His mind is clear and his road map has definite direction.

"I'm going to just keep on playing," says Wagner. "I'm not a manager, I'm not the guy who gets the sponsors. I don't control the sport. I'm not getting into anything that will take my mind off playing."

"The fans want to see professional racquetball. They don't give two hoots about politics. They want to see the best the sport has to offer and I give it to 'em. I give 'em great racquetball, everything I have."

"Some day, I'll get another sponsor so I can keep the money I win and not have so much of it going toward expenses. But it doesn't get me down. I'm feeling good about my game and myself. I've beaten almost everybody since I've come back and I'll keep doing it."

Richard Wagner, the good news is, is once again totally consumed with racquetball. ●

Are Tournaments Still Turning on the Amateurs?

by Carol Brusslan

Most racquetball players are—by nature—competitive. Put a racquet in a beginner's hand, place him in a court and soon you have a player looking for another novice to beat.

Clubs and manufacturers have capitalized on that singular racquetball trait by sponsoring tournaments at which players can spend their weekends doing what they like to do best—playing for blood. And since amateur tournaments are an integral part of the sport, the level of interest in organized competition is an appropriate measure of the current interest in racquetball.

National Racquetball recently sampled the opinions of racquetball people around the country to determine trends in the amount of tournament play.

In two parts of the country—Texas and Idaho—the story is the same. There's plenty of play, but it's more local than it was a year ago. Bruce Hendin, owner of the Racquetball and Handball Clubs of San Antonio and Houston, says players

are still competing, as 603 of them did in the seventh annual Texas State Championships in October, but *"they're staying closer to home."* Bob Peterson, part owner and general manager of The Court House in Boise, reports a *"a big, strong group at local tournaments, but we're not getting the players any more from Portland, Seattle, Spokane and Salt Lake City."*

Jean Sauser, co-owner of the Milwaukie

(OR) Racquetball Club says there's less interest in amateur tournaments in her part of the country than there was a year or so ago. And she thinks there are specific reasons for it.

"In the northwest players are suffering from the once burned, twice shy syndrome," says the former pro tour regular. *"Sandbagging is one of the things that have turned people off. We don't have a computer system here, so better players*

Bruce Hendin



The amateurs may not have the perfect swing or the proper strategy or the fanciest shots, but they give it all they have.



Look at that beauty! The hard work, sweat and practice is all worth it—if you pick up the prize.

go into the novice division and then the real novice gets blown out and humiliated in front of the entire family he or she has brought to watch the match. The novice says 'I'll never do that again' and blames the tournament and the club. In Chicago my own brother sandbagged, and then lost to a bigger sandbagger."

Sauser says poorly directed tournaments also keep players away from future events. *"The poor player gets the jitters before the tournament. Then she gets the jitters right before her match. But her match doesn't go on for three hours past the scheduled time. She has to sit through three hours of jitters. She keeps warming up and cooling down. She's mad."*

Greediness is a problem, too, Sauser says, singling out the people who charge a lot, but don't give enough as the *"biggest tournament killers of all."*

Tom Murray, math teacher at Marshall Junior High in Janesville, WI, has another theory about diminishing tournament participation in his state. He says the drop in numbers is due to the *"Can You Top This?"* game. *"Because of inflation the components of the tournament are inflated and a club can't afford to give people more and more,"* he says.

Murray and his committee now running the Wisconsin Racquetball Association are trying out a pared down tournament—charging just \$7 and offering no food or souvenir items.

That's an approach similar to one that Linda Synaeghel says has been successful at Cote de Liesse Racquetball Club in Montreal, where they have twice the number of players as a year ago, but less tournament action than in 1980. Cote de Liesse charges \$12 for tournament play alone and then adds another fee for a tournament party.

Wisconsin's Murray and other directors of the Wisconsin Racquetball Association are using another device they hope will stimulate tournament participation. The Association is distributing wallet-sized cards with a list of the 25 major events in the state in the hopes of cutting down the number of competing tournaments over any one weekend.



A competing event in New Haven, CT (qualifying rounds for a men's pro stop) didn't stop 700 participants from flocking to the fifth Long Island Open at Centre Courts in Rockville Center, NY and at nearby Universal Court Club in Massapequa the weekend of November 13. Ellen Schuerger, manager of Centre Courts, says that tournament, as large as it's ever been, and an October tournament at the same club are examples of two extremes in tournament participation.

"The attendance at the Self-Spalding October tournament was very poor, even though they were offering \$10,000 in prizes," says Schuerger. *"But the Self tournament had only four divisions for men and four for women."*

So more divisions offering opportunities for more levels of players may be one way in which clubs can rekindle interest in tournaments. Sauser has some other suggestions.

"People still want to be in tournaments if they're well run. Hosts must limit the number of players to the number they can handle. We have eight courts at our club, so I won't handle more than 150 entrants. Then the club has to have enough help during the tournament. I usually have two people at the control desk, checking people in, assigning referees and getting players to the courts. And then I have two people in the hospitality room. That leaves me free to put out the fires—which can range from checking into sandbagging to easing the pain of the losers, and maybe talking to somebody who's had too many beers."

Sauser also believes in progress. *"You can't give a Turkey Shoot year after year and expect people to sign up. A tournament director has to have fresh ideas."* ●

Peaceful Coexistence for

Joe Jennings heads the Racquetball Association of Ireland.



—Arthur Shay photos

Ireland's political battles may line up in the north, but there's another controversy that's as hot in Dublin as it is in Belfast. It centers around the country's new 20 by 40 foot courts.

Until 1970 the Irish played their nation's ancient sport on 60 by 30 foot outdoor handball "alleys"—three wall courts that were the heart of male social life in every village and city.

But 11 years ago Ireland's first 20 by 40 foot court was built to international standards in the Oldtown Club in County Dublin, 10 miles from the city. And today racquetball is more popular than handball at Oldtown and is attracting players to other 20 by 40 foot courts.

Therein lies the problem.

"Irish handball players don't accept racquetball," says U.S. Handball Association Director Bob Peters, who has toured Ireland twice at the invitation of the Irish Handball Council that sponsors an annual international competition.

The handball-racquetball dispute mirrors the attitude of most Irish men toward women who want to play the court sport that's been a national pastime for more than five centuries. "Irish women learn handball in grade school," Peters says, "but as adults they have trouble finding courts where the men will let them play."



Racquetball Player Bridin Ui Mhoalagain, front, wears the blazer she earned for distinction in sports at the University College of Dublin, as she poses on an American racquetball court with fellow Irish handball players competing in Chicago.



Surrounded by Chicago landmarks are, left to right, Ann Cody, Mary Fitzgerald, Ann Barnes, Bridin Ui Mhoalagain, Irish Vice Consul Conor Barrington, Majella Mylthton and Susan Caruy.

Susan Caruy, left, and Bridin Ui Mhoalagain try their new court sport on a Chicago visit that included a tour of the Downtown Court Club.



A group of Irish women have broken the barrier and have become top flight handball players. Many of those women are turning to racquetball.

Among Ireland's racquetball enthusiasts is Bridin Ui Mhoalagain, a Dublin high school teacher who was in Chicago in June competing in the U.S. Handball Association Nationals. "Right now there are about 2,500 racquetball players in Ireland," she says. "The girls in Belfast are playing, too."

1978's all-Ireland over 30 singles and doubles ladies handball champ first played racquetball in 1979 on a court in the home of J.J. (Joe) Jennings, who started promoting racquetball after he saw it played in the United States. A wealthy builder in his 60s Jennings is chairman of the Racquetball Association of Ireland.

Since its first meeting in a Dublin pub on June 30, 1980 the R.A.I. has been running

All-Ireland racquetball tournaments on the court in Jennings's home in Goatstown, an hour outside of Dublin.

Jennings believes "passionately" that racquetball can speed up the acceptance of 20 by 40 foot courts, bringing Ireland's version of handball in line with world standards and making the game accessible to more than the current 22,000 Irish players.

Another lifelong handball player has seen the two sports flourish together on this side of the Atlantic. USHA and United States Racquetball Association President Bob Kendler remembers when "handball players regarded racquetball as the enemy, ready to invade their courts."

"Then all the courts went up for racquetball players. Now the two sports enjoy peaceful coexistence and the handball players have more courts to play in . . . and some even play racquetball, too." ●

An Irish Racquetball Booster

Setting off a broad face, fair skin, short cropped strawberry blonde hair and penetrating blue eyes is a grass green flowered eyelet lace dress accented by a seafoam green purse and a name tag covered with a jumble of Gaelic letters.

The owner of these items is, indeed, proud to be Irish.

Bridin Ui Mhoalagain also is proud to have a mission. Make that many missions.

Sitting in the Charlie Club in Palatine, IL during the United States Handball Association Nationals in June Bridin explains at a fast pace the problems she faces as she seeks recognition for Irish women's handball. "The Irish government only subsidizes the men's team—we have to pay our own way."

She launches into another Mhoalagain mission—the outing to Germany's Black Forest that she and her husband, Aidan, arrange each summer for handicapped children. "We



Handicapped Irish children get a summer vacation thanks to the exhibition racquetball tournament Bridin runs each year.

raised enough money to bring more children this year," she says, "by holding an exhibition tournament for handball and racquetball players." Which brings her to her third mission—racquetball.

"The first time we played the game Aidan and I took to it like ducks to water. I think it's the family sport par excellence and I'm doing my best to get more people in Ireland introduced to the game."

Bridin's enthusiasm builds with each new topic. Soon it's clear where she gets her zeal for a cause.

"My father was active in the old I.R.A. in 1916, when Ireland became a free state," she says. "He was in jail for six years and spent one of those with President Eamonn DeValera in the Lincoln prison in England." Then she announces with relish "My father helped DeValera escape. They collected wax from the candles during Mass and when they had enough, they pressed the priest's master key into the wax. They then drew a small scale model of the key on a Christmas card. The key came back in a cake and DeValera escaped."

Backed by such ingenious genes (and perhaps inspired by a bit of Blamey) racquetball is bound to take off in Ireland. ●

The Racquetball Cure

by Susan Nightingale

The symptoms are nausea, abdominal pains, sweaty palms, weak knees, dryness of the mouth and heart palpitations. It's not the Hong Kong flu, it's—Tournament Time.

After playing racquetball for over two years and being over 30 I've come to the conclusion that I'll never be another Jennifer Harding. Even so I love the game and the excitement of a tournament.

The morning of my first match is always the most grueling; trying to calm myself and deciding what to wear take up most of the morning. After deciding on my matching shorts, socks, head band, and wrist band I then stand in front of the mirror and practice my smile in case I'm annihilated in the first match. That way after I shake my opponent's hand, at least she and the spectators will say what a wonderful sport I am.

Next I pick up my sister Katie whom I've been dragging along ever since my first tournament when I was alone and my opponent had all but the New Christy Minstrels rooting her on. I've told Katie to be supportive but to please not break out into one of her old cheerleading routines.

After checking in at the front desk and getting a run down on the logistics and accommodations of the club I change and do my warm-up exercises and meet Katie at the courts.

A few months ago as Katie and I approached the courts, I said I hoped the sumo wrestler in the corner with the red shorts and 16 inch biceps wasn't my opponent.

"Do you mean the one that looks like she eats raw meat for breakfast?" she asked.

"Oh you know her," I said. "It can't be, my opponent's name is Michelle Taylor, and she certainly doesn't look like a Michelle."

"Hi," this coming from tall, deep tan and handsome. "I'm Tony Salerno, your match referee. Let me introduce you to your



opponent, Michelle, and get you two started."

"Michelle," he called across the room.

"Find out if she had steak tartare for breakfast," Katie said to no one in particular.

"Michelle, this is Susie your opponent," Tony said.

"Mike," she said.

"Pardon me?" I asked.

"I like to be called Mike not Michelle."

"You girls can warm up for five minutes in court three," Tony said.

"After you Mikie," I said.

"Mike, not Mikie," she said threateningly.

After Mike kept hitting the ball to herself for a minute or so I decided she didn't really want to warm up with me, so I got my own ball. I started practicing my smile again after I saw her hit two rollouts and one crotch shot.

I won the toss for serve and realized my Hong Kong flu-like symptoms were increasing as I tried desperately to psyche myself for this match.

My first serve was my left corner low drive serve which usually dazzles them. Usually. I nearly got whiplash from trying to follow the ball after Mike returned it.

The rest of the game was a slaughter. I was telling myself that my concentration was off, my nerves were shot, my killshot was gone, my serves were the pits and any other excuse I could come up with as she killed me 21-5. She didn't even wait for me to shake her hand and smile.

I went looking for Katie for some cheering up during our break. "What happened to you?" she asked. "You look like you've never been on the court before. You better get your act together quick and stop letting her rattle you."

After her encouraging words I used the rest of my time out to psyche myself out of my slump. Mike was back on the court after 30 seconds, ready to finish off the job. I decided to take the total two minutes if for nothing else than to possibly throw her game off.

Her first serve of the next game was a lob serve which I miraculously returned off the back wall for a killshot to the right corner. My first serve hit right on target and Mike missed it. My second serve was a lob which she returned with a ceiling shot and I returned with a killshot off the back wall again. She was getting shaken a little, I thought as my serve to the left corner died nicely without her touching it. My next serve was another lob which hit the ceiling, and Mike called "top wall."



Warming Up . . . a good place to relieve nervousness and find out some important information about your opponent. She kills everything, she hits with awesome power, she has a great backhand . . .

—Photo by Steve Shay

"Top wall?" I questioned. "I've never heard it called top wall before," I said laughing. I started to take my second serve when she said menacingly, "I call it top wall." A little shaken by her tone of voice I replied "well that makes sense." "Top Wall," I yelled to the ref as I took my serve over.

I couldn't believe myself. I was really playing incredibly well this game. Each shot seemed to be on the money and my serves were equally as good.

I won the game 21-11. I had much more confidence in myself now and spent my break again psyching myself for the tie-breaker.

"Well I've regained my self assurance in my game and even if I lose I at least am happy that I'm playing a good game," I told Katie.

"Lose. You aren't going to lose. You are going to smoke her sneakers off that court and make her wish she never lifted up a racket. Now go in there and kill that bimbo," Katie said.

"That's what I like about you Katie, your good sportsmanship."

The next game was incredible. We kept tying each other and had some terrific volleys, just the type of game I love to play. The score was 10-9, my favor and my

serve and I knew this was going to be do or die and I did. It was a beautiful Z serve, which she returned with a killshot to the right hand corner, which came out just enough so that I could gently tap it to the front wall where she couldn't return it from her center court position.

"I won," I yelled as I was jumping up and down. Seeing the look on Mike's face I decided to be a little humble. I started to shake her hand and tell her what a good game we had when she shocked me by smiling and telling me that I was the toughest match she had had in a long time and asked if we could possibly get together to play again some time.

"Would you and your Dallas cheerleader friend like to have a beer with me? I don't know anyone here and would appreciate the company," she said.

"I'd love to and I'm sure my sister would also. We'll meet you in the lounge."

"Katie, we had her all wrong," I said. "She's really very nice. I told her we'd join her for a beer in the lounge."

"You go ahead," she said. "Tony's going to give me a lesson. He said after watching my jumps he thought I had potential."

"Right," was all I could say.

The tournament flu—the stomach pains, the skipped heartbeats—had vanished. As Joe Namath says, "When you win, nothing hurts." ●

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Book Review

Mr. Smith's Breathing Book

"Can't we keep *anything* simple?" might be your first reaction to Philip Smith's *Total Breathing*. But three paragraphs into the preface you'll be eager to apply the practical information you'll find in this McGraw-Hill paperback.

Smith, a regular columnist for *Gentlemen's Quarterly* who has written for Art and Andy Warhol's *Interview Magazine*, describes the doctrine of an ancient tribe that measured life "*not by the number of years, but by the number of breaths one was allotted in a lifetime. By slowing down their rate of breathing ... these people reportedly could greatly enhance their lifespan. A true master could make a single breath last for several hours.*"

The basis of Smith's update on that life-prolonging doctrine is "*total breathing*," as opposed to the high, mid and low breathing that comes naturally, especially to people who sit at desks and/or who experience tension.

"Each emotion has a unique breathing pattern all its own. If we are tense or afraid," Smith writes, "*our breathing becomes quick and shallow ... The way we breathe affects the way we think and feel, while the way we think and feel affects the way we breathe.*"

Smith alludes to another cycle in his chapter on a stop-smoking program. He says "*our body becomes conditioned to breathing normally only with a cigarette*," yet "*from the very first cigarette ever smoked the breathing becomes increasingly shallow until in the end it is reduced to mere panting.*"

"Smoking works because it makes you breathe," writes Smith, who then prescribes a seven day stop-smoking schedule built around 13 breathing exercises ranging from "ahh" breath to rhythmic chest expansion.

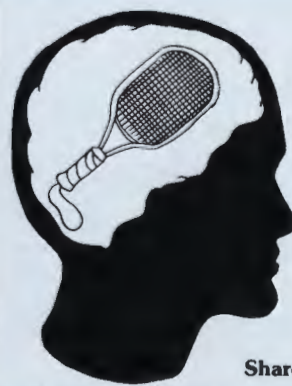
Total Breathing also shows how the right breathing can help your racquetball game (applying breathing principles for tennis.) "*For any shot you should inhale the total breath as the arm moves backward in preparation for the swing ... smoothly exhale as you swing ... as soon as you hit the ball, finish ... with a single huff through an open mouth.*" Rhythmic breathing increasing coordination, Smith writes, because it sets a basic pace.

One of the pleasures of Philip Smith's *Total Breathing* is its total coverage of the subject—into unexpected but logical areas like how to breathe if you're caught in a fire or if you're stuck in an elevator.

There's even advice when your child pulls that classic ploy of holding his breath until he gets his way.

"The seemingly defenseless parent who is at the mercy of the child's threat does have one major trump card at his or her disposal—the infinite intelligence of the body. When we hold our breath, we quickly begin to starve the body of its necessary oxygen supply, but the body is not one to be hijacked. Once the carbon dioxide reaches dangerous concentrations, the breath holder will pass out and in the state of unconsciousness will automatically start breathing again ... So let your kid hold his breath for as long as he likes; just make sure he's sitting in a well upholstered chair."

Could any advice be simpler? ●



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More Forehand Add-Ons

by Shannon Wright with Steve Keeley

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As we continue our travel through the forehand stroke, it might help to keep last month's copy of *National Racquetball* handy to refer to some of the helpful hints we've already covered.

You'll recall that we took you through the basic forehand stroke with add-ons 1-10, and in this issue, we'll add on to the stroke by generating some power, among other things.

So, get that racquet ready, for here we go.

11. This is the same as the previous step, but now you get to take your maximum backswing and follow-through. Your maximum is whatever depth of backswing and follow-through that feels right and comfortable, as long as you remain within the upper and lower table-top barriers. In other words, the brick walls have been removed, but the tables remain.

From the very back of your backswing with the wrist cocked, your racquet should sweep level at knee height throughout the stroke and follow-through. Don't worry about the distance of your follow-through, as long as it remains horizontal and doesn't jerk to a premature stop right after you hit the ball. This stroke is now similar to slapping someone across the face. There is an analogous backswing, wrist cock, level swing to the contact area, wrist snap at the point of contact, and level follow-through. Just pretend the ball has a face, then slap it with the racquet.

Let's review this step. The ready position is with the racquet cocked at the back of your maximally comfortable backswing. Bounce the ball so it peaks at knee level and, as usual, stroke it with a good wrist snap in the contact zone. The shot should travel about knee-high into the front wall and rebound back to you. Catch or retrieve it, and repeat at least twenty times.

Add-on 11. Take as deep a backswing as feels comfortable. The wrist still starts cocked at the top of the backswing and snaps at ball contact. In addition, the entire stroke is still fairly horizontal.



Add-on 12. Start your backswing with a ninety-degree crook at your elbow. Your forearm points up at the ceiling and your wrist is cocked up and back.



Add-on 13. Start in an open stance and . . .



. . . step into a closed stance. This add-on simulates stepping into a shot.

12. Now let's transform your backswing and follow-through into a more realistic stroke. It entails only a simple add-on—a truer-to-form backswing. Start the stroke as in the previous step, with your hitting arm straight back and parallel to the floor in the cocked backswing position. Freeze right there. Now crook your elbow to a ninety-degree angle. The tricep-bicep portion of your upper arm is still parallel to the floor, but your forearm (from elbow to wrist) should point straight up at the ceiling. Your wrist is still cocked up and back. The face of the racquet should lie in about the same plane as your shoulders.

Feel better? Take a hefty swipe at the ball. The only difference from the previous step is that we've removed the upper limiting table at the top of your back-

swing. Though your backswing starts higher than before, your stroke should flatten out at knee height. The imaginary lower tabletop is still intact so that your swing must sweep along this up to and after ball contact.

You now have one full piece of the model forehand stroke—the backswing. Once again, the top of the backswing has the triceps approximately parallel to the floor, the elbow crooked at about ninety degrees, and the forearm pointing directly at the ceiling. Hit twenty or more shots. Then add on.

13. You have not stepped into the ball up to this point. This may have felt awkward, especially if you have ever thrown or hit any kind of ball in any sport at all. Let's take care of that awkwardness with this step.

Start with the previous step, with the racquet cocked in the crooked backswing ready position—but now do not assume a closed stance. Instead, begin with both feet parallel to each other and equidistant from the right sidewall. Okay, without the ball and without swinging your racquet, simply step into the closed stance. That's it, just step with your left foot—perhaps a little forward but mostly toward the right sidewall. Freeze. You should now be back in the closed stance as per the last dozen steps, only with your racquet raised in the forehand ready position.

Repeat this movement again, starting in an open stance and then stepping into the closed stance. No swings and no balls yet. You're just learning how to step properly into the swing. Repeat twenty times.



Add-on 14. Start with an open stance, step into a closed stance and swing at an imaginary ball.

14. Now you're going to add a racquet swing (without the ball) to the previous step. Start in an open stance with both feet approximately parallel and the same distance from the right sidewall. Your racquet is in a backswing position. Now begin your step into the closed stance and, as soon as your stepping foot hits the floor, swing at an imaginary ball.

That's all there is to it. The trick is to get the step in synchrony with the swing. Don't use any body rotation on the backswing or follow-through yet. Step and swing, step and swing, repeating at least twenty times.

15. This step adds the ball to the previous step and swing. Start in an open stance with your racquet back in the



Add-on 15. Bounce the ball so it will peak at knee height. Step into a closed stance after the ball hits the floor, start your downswing as your lead foot hits the floor, and hit the ball in

the contact zone after it peaks just below your knees. No, or very little, body rotation yet—that comes in the next and final add-on.

cocked ready position as before. Then perform this sequence of movements: I purposely ran together the movements in this step because this step is truly a run-on of add-ons. That is, one movement triggers another and another, like the laying down of dominoes. This should be a fluid sequence of motion rather than a jerky series of individual movements.

This is a very important step in our add-on game. It is also the first step that

demands real timing, so don't be discouraged if your first few attempts are the staccato and mechanical movements of a robot operating on almost-drained batteries. The pauses and jerks will melt away with practice, and the individual movements will blend into a continuous motion. However, this may take more than 20 repetitions. Just keep telling yourself with each mistake on this step that patience is a virtue and persistence is divine.

16. We are at the end of the forehand add-ons that add up to the model stroke. Before tacking on the final step, run a mental check on these important points:

- a. Is your wrist cocked up and back correctly?
- b. Is your elbow crooked on the backswing?
- c. Does your step into the stroke take you into a closed rather than an open stance?
- d. Are you snapping your wrist forcefully at ball contact?
- e. Is your swing fairly level and knee-high (as opposed to going in a big circle)?
- f. Is your racquet handle nearly parallel to the floor (instead of pointing at the floor) when you contact the ball?
- g. When you bounce the ball before swinging, does it hit the floor at the proper depth and distance from your lead foot? Does the ball peak at your knees?
- h. Is your whole stroke basically fluid, with add-on steps running imperceptibly together?

Now let's add on the final add-on in our model drop-and-hit stroke. This is the step in which you put body rotation into your swing. This means that the body coils on the backswing and uncoils on the downswing to provide explosive stroke power. Body rotation goes hand in hand with the step into the ball. These factors—the coil, the step—and the uncoil—ensure proper weight transfer. You've no doubt heard of this last term if you've participated in almost any kind of sport. In racquetball, weight transfer means that during the backswing the majority of your body weight rests on your rear foot, and during the follow-through the majority of that weight is shifted to the lead foot.

We may be getting bogged down here in obscure terms and nonspecifics. I'm going to use an analogy from baseball to

illustrate the coil-step-uncoil that assures proper weight transfer. Consider the baseball batter receiving a pitched ball. As the ball comes at him he coils: He turns his pelvis slightly toward the catcher and simultaneously turns his shoulders even a bit more than his pelvis toward the catcher, also simultaneously shifting his body weight until most of it rests on his rear foot.

Let's freeze the image of that batter right there at the maximum body coil. The body coil before the swing is sometimes called body rotation or the windup. You can see that it is like tightening a spring, or cocking a gun, or like a rattlesnake coiling for the strike. All these build potential energy.

Let's get back to our baseball batter, who is still frozen in the maximum coil. As the baseball is about to enter the strike zone the batter uncoils explosively: His lead foot triggers the uncoil by stepping toward the pitcher—more toward first base for the racquetball stroke—which causes his hips to lead the uncoil by twisting forcefully around toward the pitcher. Simultaneously, his shoulders come around forcefully in the same direction as his hips, and then he swings the bat, which rides the surge of the powerful body uncoiling. Also simultaneously, his weight shifts almost entirely to his lead foot as he hits the ball.

That's the basic baseball swing, as well as the basic racquetball forehand swing—from the standpoint of body coil, stepping into the ball, and body uncoil. Note that this analogy has other parallels that are not directly related to weight transfer. There are analogous wrist cocks, wrist breaks, follow-throughs, and so on. But these items have already been covered in previous add-on steps. This step is concerned only with tapping the huge energy source of the body's bulk by coiling, stepping, and uncoiling.



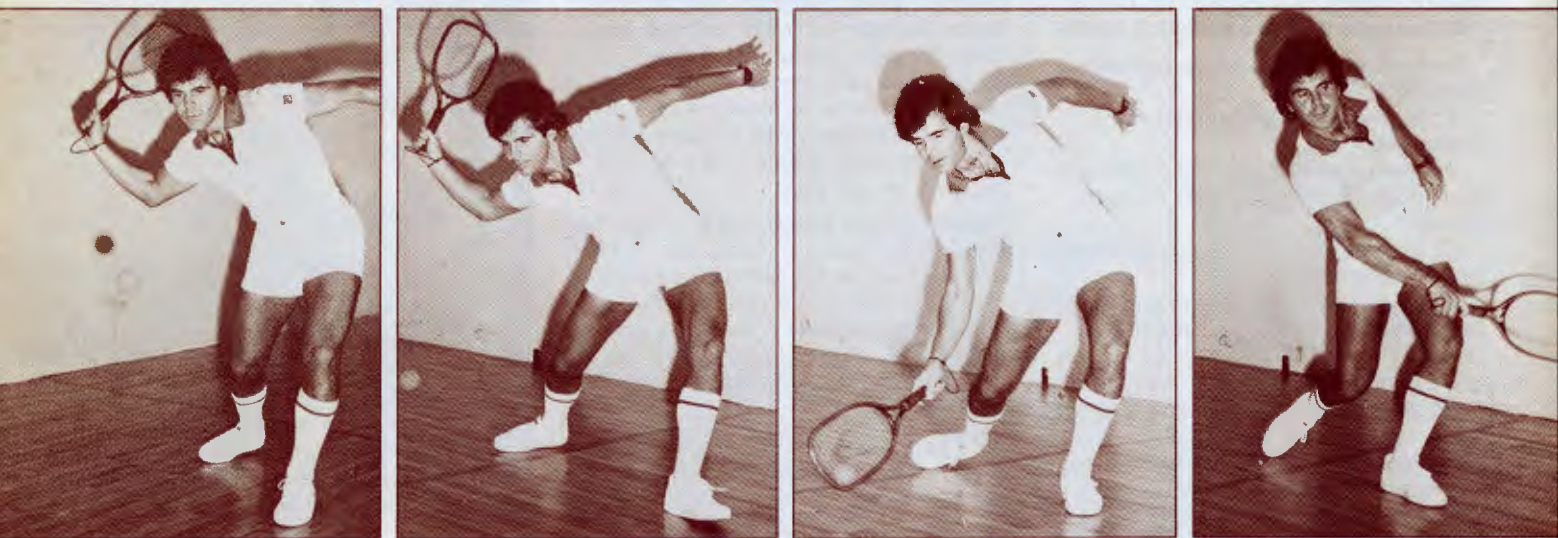
Add-on 16. The final add-on. Coil your hips and shoulders on the backswing, then . . .

. . . uncoil during the downswing. Body rotation is a major source of power on the stroke.



You'll probably learn more about body rotation and weight transfer by doing it than by having me drone on about theories and analogies. So do it, with this final add-on for the forehand. Perform the same drop-and-hit motion as described in the previous step, but this time coil on your backswing and uncoil on your downswing. Pretend, if you wish, that you are a baseball batter, a human spring, or a rattlesnake in a T-shirt. Thus, the sequence for this step is as follows:

That's it. Note that the racquetball stroke is a strength move as well as a speed move. It must be both forceful and fluid. Like a karate blow, it is a singular intense release of concentrated power and motion. Yet, the stroke must be less than an all-out flail or else you'll lose control and strain your arm. Obviously, this step is going to require some practice. Perform this final add-on until you feel coordinated and comfortable with the model forehand. ●



Summary of Add-Ons

It has been a lengthy trip through the forehand stroke add-ons. A road map might now prove helpful so you can remember where you've been and so you don't get lost when you return. Use the following summary of the forehand add-on steps as that road map.

1. Grip the racquet with the proper forehand grip.
2. Stand on the short line facing the right sidewall.
3. Close your stance by sliding your lead foot toward the right sidewall.
4. Extend your arm and racquet toward the right sidewall and cock your wrist up and back.
5. Take the racquet into a horizontal one-foot backswing with the wrist still

cocked.

6. Take an abbreviated stroke without the ball, using a one-foot backswing and a one-foot follow-through.

7. Bounce the ball on the floor at a spot approximately one foot behind and two feet out from your lead foot. Catch rather than hit the ball just after it peaks at knee height.

8. Bounce and hit the ball in the center of the contact zone just after it peaks at knee height. Flick the ball at the front wall using the abbreviated stroke with a one-foot backswing and a one-foot follow-through.

9. Drop and wrist-flick the ball at the front wall using a stroke with a two-foot backswing and a two-foot follow-through.

10. Drop and flick-hit the ball using a stroke with a three-foot backswing and a

three-foot follow-through.

11. Drop and hit the ball using your maximum comfortable backswing and follow-through. The entire stroke is still level and knee-high from backswing to follow-through.

12. Add a more realistic backswing to the stroke by crooking your elbow at 90 degrees, with your forearm pointing up at the ceiling.

13. Start with an open stance and step into a closed stance as though stepping into the ball. Do not swing yet.

14. Start with an open stance, step into a closed stance, and swing at an imaginary ball.

15. Step into and hit the ball.

16. Add body rotation—coil and uncoil of your hips and shoulders—to the swing to ensure proper weight transfer.

Ask The Champ

by Marty Hogan

Four time and current National Champion Marty Hogan answers questions about improving your game as this exclusive series returns to *National Racquetball*. Readers are encouraged to submit questions about their game to Marty Hogan, c/o *Ask The Champ*, National Racquetball, 1800 Pickwick Ave., Glenview, IL 60025

Question: I've heard people say how important the serve is to your overall game. Exactly how do you view the serve and how do you use and how do you utilize it against various opponents?

Hogan: Your serve will dictate your game plan. How I serve a particular opponent results in the type of match we'll play. Hopefully, I'll be accurate with my serves and the games will fall into the strategic framework that I want.

For example, a drive serve will usually get you another aggressive shot in return. Slam bang—aggressive game. So, you drive the ball on the serve, if you want your opponent to hit it back at you just as, or nearly as hard. Of course, this can lead to errors by your opponent, which is one of the major benefits of the drive serve.

In fact, I'll drive serve to anybody's backhand in racquetball today, and let them try and kill the serve. Nobody's backhand is that well developed. I've played matches where I knew, I mean I could take it to the bank, that I'd get four or five skips on backhand kill attempts off the serve by my opponent. And I did.

Now, if you don't like the fast game, or if your opponent has flaws in his game, then you'll want the rallies to last as long as possible, because the longer the rally lasts, the greater chance of his error. In this case, use a lob or medium speed Z serve, both of which should get you a ceiling ball return.

Remember, don't hit the serve super hard against this type opponent because he'll have to hit back hard to you and if he does that, he won't go to the ceiling (where you want to be), but he'll be blasting away (where you don't want to be.) The ceiling game takes "touch."

A good rule to remember is: however hard you hit the serve, you should expect a return about the same speed.

Question: The guys who really give me fits are the "finesse" players. You know, the guys who dink it here and dink it there, heavy on control, light on power. What strategy should I take?

Hogan: A finesse player, by definition, doesn't like the power game. Therefore, if you can hit hard against him by all means, do so, and you'll give him problems, making it hard for him to play his style.

However, a finesse player normally has pretty good control, and if he's any good, he'll be making it difficult for you to generate your full power. So, how do you attack him?

Since finesse players usually have fairly well balanced games, I concentrate on throwing off their timing. I like the "isolation theory" which has worked well for me in the past. Simply put, I'll hit every ball to one side of my opponent, like ceilings or drives. Only rarely will I vary this consistent barrage to one side. After a while I will have effectively neutralized 50 percent of his game.

Now, if you are able to hit with enough power to make life miserable for the finesse player, you can expect he'll be doing all that he can to compensate for that fact. So, just to be fair, attention all finesse players! Here's what to do against the big hitters.

First, you *must* neutralize his power. Now, nobody in racquetball (except you know who) is going to be as strong from either side. To neutralize his power, you must destroy his power source. Each player has certain power sources, places on the court, positions in relation to their body, etc., from where they generate maximum power. It is up to you to recognize these power sources, and then stay away from them.

For example, you might have to hit the ball a little higher than usual, either passing shots, or to the ceiling, and forsake

the kills and low, down-the-line passes, if your opponent's power source is down low (many are).

No matter which style of racquetball you play, the strategic secret is to get your opponent out of his style and groove. In order to accomplish this you need two things, 1) the knowledge to understand what you have to do, and 2) the skill to do it. You develop both by reading, playing and practicing.

Question: I've seen countless photos of you in *National Racquetball*, and often, you seem to be off balance, in terms of traditional racquetball strokes. Have you thrown out the basic racquetball strokes?

Hogan: You bet! I've totally thrown out many of the traditional "fundamentals," especially in footwork. What is important to me is upper body control. Due to the super fast pace of pro racquetball, I learned early that there just isn't enough time to position my feet the so-called "right" way. Basically, I've learned to hit the ball without footwork.

If you develop your stroke well, to the point where you can take your swing from any position, you'll be a much better player. My power comes from arm swing and upper body movement, and of course, the wrist snap. There's no need for me to use waist down—I'll be generating 80 percent of my power from my upper body.

My stroke is the first pure racquetball stroke in the history of racquetball. When I was 15-years-old, everybody told me to change my stroke, and it's a good thing I didn't. If I was the God of racquetball I would want everybody to have my stroke, because it's the best, and the most copied.

I've seen some kids who have just as good a swing as mine. Nobody "old," in their 20's, but a lot of 14- and 15-year-olds. This means there's some really talented juniors out there. I say, let the kids develop their own game.

My stroke will endure because I developed it for racquetball. Mine was an entirely new style of everything. Unless somebody comes along with a brand new, totally shocking style for the game, the stroke I use will continue to dominate the sport. ●

Overhead Backhand Kill: Making The Impossible Shot

By Craig McCoy
(first in a two-part series)

It's a hard shot to explain and even harder to execute. In fact, there isn't a more difficult shot in racquetball or one with less chance of succeeding than the overhead backhand kill.

It's usually shot from the wrong part of the court for a kill (the rear) at the wrong angle (downward) on the wrong side of your body (the backhand). Most players won't even fool with it because it goes against everything we've been taught about playing percentage racquetball and, from that point of view, is an impossible shot.

But the nice thing about the overhead backhand is that, when it works, it blows away the percentages and a percentage playing opponent along with them. There is no defense against this shot. It's the wild card in the deck, and can effectively hog-tie your opponent.

For example, it was nip-and-tuck for me during my quarter-final match against Don Thomas at the 1981 National Championships. Don was the hometown favorite and had taken the first game from me 21-17. We were 12-12 in the second game when, during two consecutive ceiling rallies, I pulled out two overhead backhand kills in a row.

After that, he didn't know whether to play up or back and, every time we got into a ceiling ball situation, he tried to cover the whole court which is, of course, impossible. He only scored four more points that match and the second and third games ended 21-15 and 11-1 respectively. That's what makes the overhead backhand kill worthwhile.

Still, it remains a one-in-10 shot, even for someone like me who has been practicing it for years. I first became interested in the shot when I was about 14 and saw Carl Loveday use it in a match. Later, Steve Keeley, Charlie Brumfield and I used to play around with it.

You hit the shot with basically the same body mechanics you would use for a backhand ceiling ball. You face the side

wall and, as the ball drops, step diagonally toward the wall and swing.

The difference, of course, is that you shoot for the floor instead of the ceiling, so you want the ball to be a little lower than the average ceiling ball—say, down around your neck or shoulders—and a little more in front of you.

Not only does the extreme downward angle and distance make the overhead backhand kill tricky, but also the fact that you are aiming for only about a two-foot box in the opposite corner. For me, a lefty, that would be the left front corner.

Ideally, you want to contact the sidewall there about a foot from the front wall and only four or five inches high. The ball then pinches out against the front wall.

But there's plenty to go wrong. Most people make contact too far back and/or too high on the side wall (assuming they don't skip the ball) or will hit the front wall first. This can result in the ball popping back into center court like a plum falling off a tree. Considering the fact that you have very little power in the shot because of your extreme body position, anything coming back into center court will drop so slowly that your opponent will have time for a quick Gatorade before rolling the ball out.

Like any other shot, it helps to pick your openings when you use the overhead backhand kill. Sometimes, I'll use it as a volley shot from midcourt or as a return to a garbage or lob serve. The best time to use this shot, though, is during ceiling rallies, especially in the later stages of a match when your opponent might start loafing.

The ceiling rally is a pretty neutral situation and it's where your opponent feels the safest. As long as his ceiling ball is okay, he knows you won't be stupid enough to try a low shot.

Maybe he's tired and figures he can steal a nap so he doesn't get back to center court after every shot the way he should.



Figure 1. The overhead backhand kill has essentially the same body mechanics as a ceiling ball. But the ball is brought down from about shoulder or neck height to the opposite front corner.

Vince Lombardi said that fatigue makes cowards of us all. This is where your opponent is psychologically the most vulnerable and one or two overhead backhand kills could send him into a tailspin.

Even if you miss, an opponent in the backcourt may not be able to get forward quickly enough for the return. But that isn't the point. There are much easier ways to score. The real value of this shot is what it can do to your opponent's psyche if you make it.



Figure 2. The ball should contact the opposite side wall about a foot from the front wall and about five inches high.



Figure 3. The ball will then pinch out in the corner.

You're taking away his ceiling ball, his safety valve, the most reliable aspect of the average player's arsenal. It's pretty hard for him to find a replacement.

On the other hand, don't get too cocky about it. I only use this shot if it's working. Some days I'm hot and, some days, I'm not. If the overhead backhand doesn't go in on the first couple of tries, I leave it alone.

It's just like with your other backcourt kill

shots. Ostensibly, these are all low-percentage shots. But there are some days when you just know you can hit them. You can just "feel" it.

There are just some days when the overhead backhand will work and your opponent is left wondering what he is supposed to do about it. The answer is always the same: there is no defense against an impossible shot that works. ●

How to Avert an Upset

by Charlie Garfinkel

Garfinkel's directions for creating an upset appeared in the July 1981 issue of *National Racquetball*.



Always appear confident.

Several years ago I was attempting to win my eighth consecutive Buffalo City Singles title. I was also one of the top 10 ranked players in the United States.

Of course the experts had picked me to handily win the tournament again. Being a "legend in my own mind" I heartily concurred with them.

My first match was against a player I had defeated 21-3, 21-0 two months prior to the tournament. Naturally I figured I'd have a piece of cake. (Chocolate is my favorite.) In fact I was so confident of an easy win, I said the following to him: "Playing you will be better than drawing a bye!"

Needless to say I was incredulous, frustrated and bitter, when I unbelievably lost the first game 21-13. It was inconceivable that I, Charles H. (for Humble) Garfinkel, had lost a game to this young upstart.

As I sat outside the court after game one, I quickly separated my ego from reality. I had gone into the match supremely over-

confident, and had taken my worthy opponent too lightly. In addition I really didn't have any game plan ready.

I realized that my opponent had improved since I had last played him. However I still should have won easily. I realized that I should have played everything to his backhand and hit most of my shots with as much power as possible. I had done this in our previous meeting, and as the scores indicated I was extremely successful.

As game two started, I immediately started hitting the ball harder, and continually hit everything to his backhand side. I handily won games two and three 21-7, 21-6.

Lesson One:

If you're a heavy favorite going into a match, feel confident, not overconfident. Playing with a great deal of confidence, combined with the realization that you must play hard at all times, will avert any upset attempts by your opponent.

Lesson Two:

Use the same style of play that was successful in defeating the same opponent in another tournament or tournaments.

About a year later I was playing in the finals of the Eastern Regionals in the Open division. I had already won the Seniors crown, and this was my fourth singles match of the day.

I was the definite favorite. However everyone, including myself, thought that it would be a well played and close match. No one had any idea how close the match would be.

I won game one over my opponent and good friend Tom Kutas 21-20. I lost game two 21-10 and was losing the third game 20-10. Things looked bleak, to say the least.

I regained the serve and took a time out. I was very tired. However I decided to stay to the ceiling until I could either shoot the ball or hit a passing shot. Miraculously I won the next 11 points to win the match 21-20, 10-21, 21-20.

I was very fortunate to have averted an upset. If I had entered only one division, I

would have been able to concentrate fully with the mental and physical capabilities that I was capable of using.

Lesson Three

Play only one event in a tournament. Realistically it should be the event that you have the best chance of doing well in.

Many players attempt new shots or strategies when they're practicing. This is all right, as long as they still can concentrate at an extremely high level.

Sometimes, because of the nature of the practice session or match, it is easy to become lazy or lethargic.

I have found that when I play as hard as I can in practice, both mentally and physically, I'm well prepared for most of the tournaments that I enter.

I'm extremely proud of the fact that I've been in the finals of eight national championships, and I've won seven of them. I attribute this to my extremely tough practice sessions where I play as hard as I can.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is a far west player who has been in nine national finals. He has never won once! Why? I feel that his on court clowning, both in practice and in tournaments, greatly affects his concentration. In addition he tries various shots that can best be described as low percentage shots.

Lesson Four:

Practice as hard as you can and concentrate at all times. This will help you execute the shots that you must make consistently.

Being in excellent physical shape will help you win many matches. It will give you the "little extra" that you'll need if you're involved in a close match.

Not surprisingly many of the top players in the older division such as the Seniors, Senior Vets, Masters, Golden Masters, etc., rarely lose.

One of the reasons is that many of these players increase the time and effort they put in conditioning. They realize that being in excellent shape is important for all ages and is even more important as you get older.

Lesson Five

In addition to playing hard at all times be an even tougher opponent to defeat by keeping yourself in excellent physical condition.

Being in excellent shape is fine. However

you should still effectively space the number of tournaments that you play in each month. Ideally you should try to play one tournament a month, or at least three every two months. Any more than that could be detrimental to your game. However the choice is yours.

As you decide which tournaments to enter with the least possibilities of upsets, you should be aware of the following:

1. Choose tournaments that will be held when you think your mind will be free from business and personal problems.
2. Forego tournaments taking place when you've laid off for two weeks or have just come back from a vacation. Enter another tournament when you'll feel more prepared.
3. If you're mixing up some tennis or squash with your racquetball, be aware of the different weights and grips that are involved.

Lesson Six:

Only enter tournaments when you're mentally and physically at your peak. Concentrate on racquetball only, and not other sports.

Having enough equipment and the proper equipment that you need is imperative in a match. You should have a minimum of two racquets and two pairs of sneakers. Two pairs of sneakers, you ask?

Yes because there is a possibility a shoelace may break. Or a sneaker may split. When you wear size 15 sneakers as I do, it is imperative that you have two pairs. However there is no truth to the rumor that I paint shoelaces on my sneaker boxes and wear them to save money.

As for two racquets this is good common sense. Personally I always have four racquets available. All are identical in make, weight and grip size.

One of the top pros from California knows what is like not to have the proper equipment. He was using a new prototype racquet in a local pro tournament. He only had one racquet. The racquet broke and he didn't have a similar racquet. He borrowed a different racquet, but he had no feel or touch with it. He lost in an incredible upset.

The next time he played the same player he had a large supply of racquets. The California pro won easily.

Lesson Seven:

Have enough of all the equipment you'll need in a match in case of emergency.

Many players like to play with either a

—Andre Gorzynski photos



"The Gar" can't believe he lost his first game, but comes back and averts an upset.



lively or slower bouncing racquetball. However they don't like playing in tournaments that use a ball that they feel that they can't play with. They're also worried that the different ball will enable players they always defeat to turn the tables.

You have two choices:

1. You can play in only those tournaments that use the type of racquetballs you like.
2. You can practice with the ball to be used in the tournament, regardless of its bounce, to get acclimated to it for the tournament.

I can't blame players for entering tournaments that use only racquetballs that they feel are best suited to their games.

However I feel that any player can get used to the bounce of the ball by diligent practice. By doing this he or she will be able to be a successful competitor in any tournament.

Lesson Eight:

Practice with the ball that is to be used for an upcoming tournament in order that you will be prepared for any type of bounce you may encounter.

Before going to each tournament you should find out the types of courts you'll be playing on. You should find out whether the courts are panel or plaster, and if there are any courts with front, back or sidewall glass.

You should then make every effort to try to practice on these types of courts before you arrive at the tournament site. If this is

impossible, you should attempt to arrive at the tournament site early. Or you could follow a routine that I've found quite successful.

When I arrive at a tournament and I'm totally unfamiliar with the courts, I try to make sure that I get sufficient practice on the court before I play my first match. This could mean playing late at night, or early in the morning.

I'll usually practice by myself. Occasionally I'll hit with someone.

By doing this I feel very confident about the court and its bounces. By the time I'm ready to play my first tournament match, I only have to concentrate on defeating my opponent.

Lesson Nine

Acclimate yourself to the court and its bounces so you can concentrate on the most important part of your match: YOUR OPPONENT!

Although upsets are common in racquetball, I think many are avoidable. Most upsets occur between players who are fairly close in ability. That is one player may usually defeat another player 21-15, 21-14. Although these scores are fairly decisive, it is not uncommon for the usually defeated player suddenly to play two or three points a game better.

If you're not playing quite up to par, when a lesser opponent is playing well, then the match can be dangerously even. However if you follow the strategies I have suggested, you will be able to win consistently against your upset minded opponent. ●

When to Kill

by Dave Peck

Last time we talked about proper body mechanics for a killshot, *"the how."* This time we'll discuss when to use what is the game's most difficult, but most satisfying, shot.

There are three possible situations during a rally: your opponent is either behind you, in front of you or beside you. The best time to use a killshot is when your opponent is behind you and in the back court.

It's then that you have the most options, and you should take advantage of the situation. Your first choice is the straight

in kill. You simply put the ball as low as you can on the front wall and hope for a rollout.

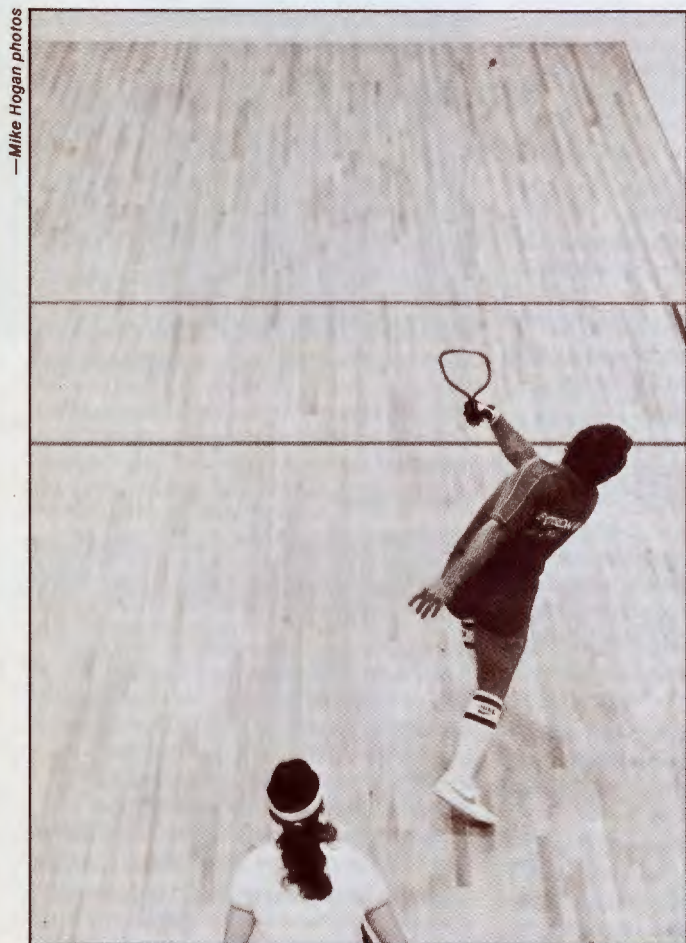
If it doesn't roll out, your opponent will still have a pretty tough time reaching the ball before it dies. Also you can take some of the pace off the ball and make the shot more confusing by using a roll-corner kill. Contact the side wall about a foot from the front wall and the ball will die more easily or, at least, head off the front wall at an oblique angle.

A straight in kill too high or too hard could carry into the back court. Likewise, with your opponent behind you, you can never be sure that he isn't moving up to cover that shot. Use the side wall whenever you can.

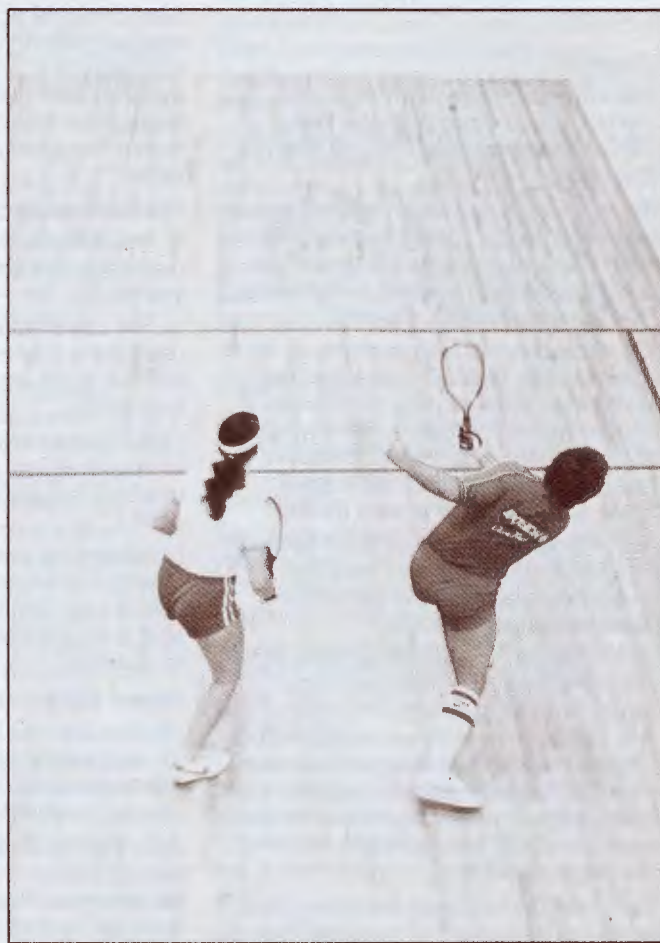
When your opponent is beside you,

whether you both are in mid court or back court, the directional component of your shot becomes much more important. Let's say he's on one side of the court and you're on the other. I would go with a pass/kill down the line. I just try to roll it out and, failing that, I usually have a good pass. It's a high percentage shot, probably the highest percentage shot in the game.

Unlike the normal pass the pass/kill should work when both of you are in the back court, too, because the ball usually won't make it all the way back like a normal pass. If you find that your opponent is crowding over into your half of the court anticipating that down-the-line, go for a cross court pass/kill instead. For that matter it's no sin just to go for a normal cross court pass in that situation.



The ideal kill situation is when your opponent is behind you in the back court. Then you can use the straight-in kill with a high degree of confidence that your opponent won't be able to reach it before it dies.



Using a roll-corner instead of straight-in kill will help take some of the pace off the ball and buy you a little kill "insurance" even if your opponent has moved up into the center court. Contact the side wall about a foot from the front wall.

—Mike Hogan photos

Naturally you can never do the same thing too often in racquetball or you become predictable. Use the pass/kills and roll-corners alternately to keep your opponent moving forward and backward. He can't go both directions at the same time, so it won't be long before his butt is dragging.

As for myself I like to take it easy and, as I mentioned in my earlier article, keep things simple. I usually go for the nearest corner—forehand or backhand—on my roll-corner kills. I figure that the less distance the ball has to travel, the less chance of something going wrong. You can always hit a target more easily 10 feet away than 20 feet from you.

For example if I have my back to the left wall and my opponent is on the right side of the court, I will go to the left corner

even though the ball will roll out toward the right side of the court and my opponent. I figure that unless I hit a bad shot, it will die before it gets to him.

I would rarely go with the backhand reverse pinch in that situation (which sends the ball back toward me) because it is a lower percentage shot. I have to shoot across my body at a target much farther away. Keep it simple, I say. On the other hand a reverse pinch now and then will keep your opponent honest.

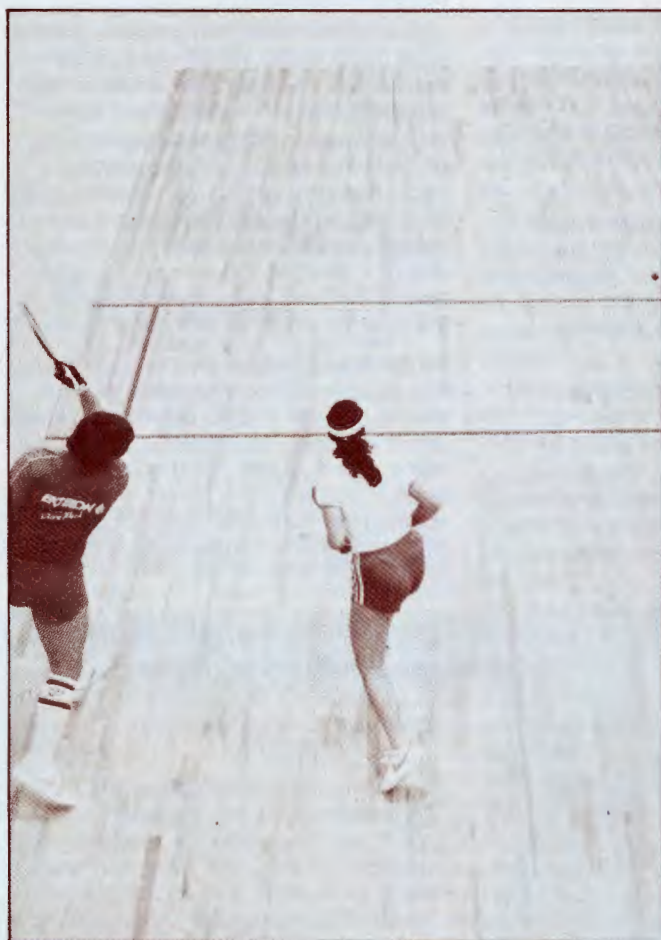
The final shooting situation is when your opponent is in front of you. If you go for the kill then, know that you are bucking the odds, especially if you're shooting from the back court.

But who can forget Art Shay's famous picture of Jerry Hilecher rolling the ball off

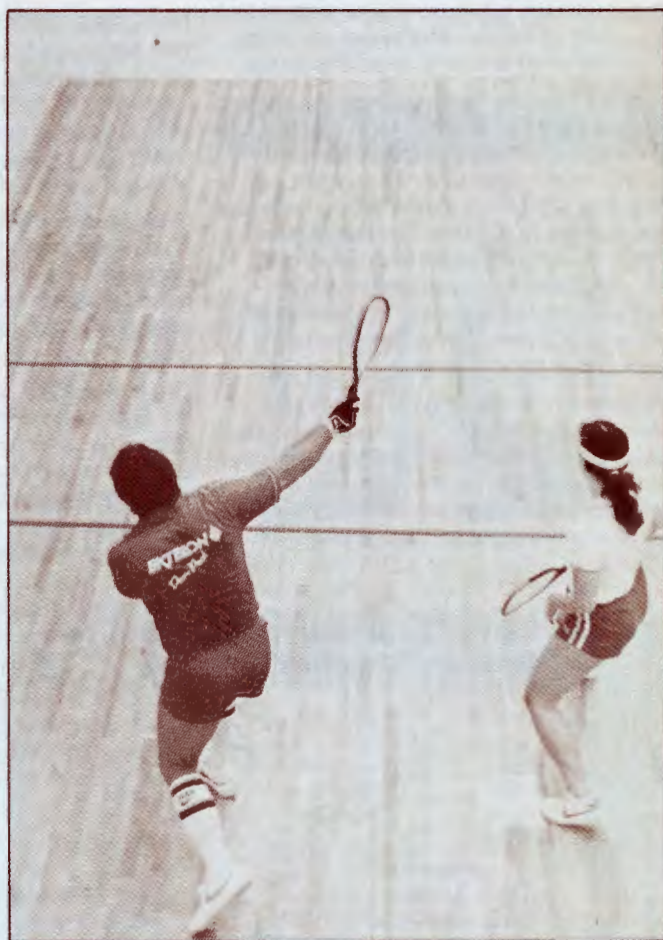
the front wall while flying through the air 39 feet back? It's what the game is all about. I wouldn't make a habit of it, but sometimes you can just "feel" that the ball will go down. A certain amount of chance taking is okay, but if those gambles aren't paying off for you, go back to playing the percentages.

As with anything else the key to success with your killshots is execution. If you can't execute, it doesn't matter what strategy you employ. Practicing the correct stroke can make a big difference. Check the August issue of *National Racquetball* for tips on that score.

In part three of my killshot series we're going to look at rekill body mechanics so you can survive a shootout. ●



If you find your opponent crowding into your half of the court, as Laura Martino is doing here to me, switch from a down-the-line pass/kill to a cross court pass/kill or even a regular passing shot.



I prefer to go to the nearest corner for my roll-corner kills, even if that means that the ball will be heading back out toward my opponent's side of the court. I figure that I have a better chance of hitting a low shot which will die before it reaches her than I do of going across my body for a reverse pinch in the farthest corner.

What's The Call?

by Dan Bertolucci

Who Gets the Byes—And Why

In the September/October issue we discussed the purpose of seeding players and generally, how they are placed on the draw sheet. We will now continue our discussion, highlighting the criteria for determining who gets seeded, and how to handle byes, which are an important aspect of each tournament draw.

We've already noted that the best player should be the number one seed, the second-best number two, etc., with number one going at the top of the draw and number two at the bottom. The questions are, however, just how do you determine the order of seeds (who's best, or better than the next) and who does this nasty, little job?

Most major tournaments form seeding committees, made up of representatives of the major clubs from which most participants will come. In addition, if entries are coming from out of the immediate area, many entry forms include spaces for players to list various tournament accomplishments. If your tournament is an annual event, last year's results will give you a good guideline.

Additionally, a seeding committee is a fine idea, because it lays the responsibility of the seeding (pairings) squarely on the shoulders of no one, just about where most tournament directors want it. (It is a universal truth that no player is

ever happy with his draw; and if he is, then he's unhappy with somebody else's.)

The most important aspect of seeding is to remember that you are judging current playing ability. Just because John Smith won last year's event, doesn't necessarily mean he should be number one seed this year. He may have lost every time out since last year, or maybe Marty Hogan enters your tournament this year. Are you going to seed Smith number one? No.

Many state associations maintain elaborate player ranking systems, or at a minimum a pretty good library of tournament results. It would be wise to contact your state association to learn what information they have about players with whom you're not familiar.

Once you've seeded the players, next insert them onto the draw sheet as described in the September/October issue. After the seeded players are placed, the next step is to insert the proper number of byes.

Oh, how players love to run up against Mr. Bye in the first round! A bye, of course, is when there is no opponent for a player in the first round. This occurs when the number of entries in a tournament does not fill up a complete "round." A round is always double multiple of

eight, i.e., 16 line draw, 32 line draw, 64 line draw etc. (That's why you always hear tournament players talking about how they barely lost in the "32's.")

If it's a 16 line draw and only 15 players enter, you'll have one bye, which goes to the top seeded player. If you had 14 players and two byes, the second bye would go to the second seed, and so on down the line.

After the byes are inserted, the next step is to insert all the unseeded players on the lines unoccupied. This can be a bit more complicated because you should make every effort to see to it that players from the same family, or same club, or same home town (for a tournament with out of town participants) are not matched against each other in the first round (it's even better to place them in opposite halves of the draw).

Use a random selection process, placing each name in the vacant slots on the draw sheet, not filled with seeds or byes. Start at the top of the draw and work your way down, filling in names and home towns as you go. If you pick a name that is in conflict with another due to the circumstances described above, merely put that name back into the "hat," and pick another. Do not use any alphabetical method, or any method based on the date on which an entry was received.

Be extremely careful as you go through this process. When you finish, all lines should be filled and no names should be left. If you have an unfilled line or extra name, check to see if you put a player in twice, if you left out a player, or if you counted the number of entries correctly. Nothing is more frustrating for a tourna-

18 Player Tournament Showing Two Preliminary Matches & Seeds



16 Player Tournament Showing Proper Position of Byes



ment director than to have a large draw and have to go back through the process to find the error.

I remember one year it took us nearly three hours to find our mistake, when doing the draw for the National Championships. It turned out that the player's entry had fallen off the desk and was sitting on the floor, overlooked by our entire committee!

Your next problem will be players who cancel. We've always followed a 48 hour rule, which means that if a player cancels prior to 48 hours before the start of the tournament, then you remove his name from the draw. If a player cancels after the 48 hour deadline, you leave his name on the draw and his opponent will receive a forfeit win.

If finding an error in the original draw is the most frustrating occurrence for a tournament director, then the second most frustrating is having to re-do a draw due to cancellation. Fortunately, it doesn't happen all that often, but it does happen.

Players who develop a history of dropping out of tournaments without valid excuses, have been known to be warned and even banned from tournament play in some areas. There is no excuse for it.

If a player drops out of the tournament prior to the 48 hour deadline, the easiest way to fix the draw is to find another player. Many tournaments protect themselves in this regard by maintaining a waiting list of late entries. Erase one name and insert the new name.

If, however, no waiting list was kept or late entries were not accepted, you must replace the dropping out player with the opponent of the highest seed who did not receive a bye. For example, if 61 players are in the tournament, the top three seeds will have received byes. Take the opponent of the number four seed and insert him in the place of the dropped player and award the number four seed with a bye.

If there are exactly 32 players in the tournament and one drops out, replace the dropped player with the opponent of the number one seed, and give the number one seed the one bye. Remember, that it is the duty of the tournament director or committee to alert any player of time changes of their matches. This is both a courtesy and a guard against accidental forfeitures. The third most frustrating occurrence for a tournament director is to award a forfeit, have the winning player

go home (or worse, play his next match), only to have his original opponent walk in six hours later with a postcard showing he's on time for this first match! It happens.

If a player drops out after the 48 hour deadline, you're in luck—you don't do anything, the draw stands. It is just too great a burden for tournament directors to re-contact people, re-work draws and so on. It will just go down as a forfeit and one of the breaks.

If a seeded player withdraws prior to the 48 hour limit, the seeding must be redone. If you're lucky it'll be a low seed, but regardless, the only fair way to balance the tournament is to re-seed. Numerically, it's not difficult, each seed simply moves up one notch. However, it also means re-placing each seed on the proper line in the draw.

If the last seeded player withdraws, a new player is chosen to receive that seeded position (the best player from among the unseeded). This will leave this newly-seeded player's opponent without an opponent. In this case follow the same procedure as with byes.

Actually, no matter what seeded player withdraws, you'll still have to select another seed, because as each seed moves up, the last seeded player will vacate a line. If eight players have been seeded and number six seed withdraws, seven moves to six, eight moves to seven and you have to select the new number eight seed.

One situation that often occurs is if you have slightly more than an even round of eight in your tournament. For example, if 34 players enter a tournament, do not try and list 22 byes. You will, in fact, be doing so however, by using preliminary matches you will keep your draw sheet uncluttered and easy to read.

A good rule to follow is if the number of entrants above an even round of eight is less than half the difference to the next even round, do not list byes. Rather, list preliminary matches.

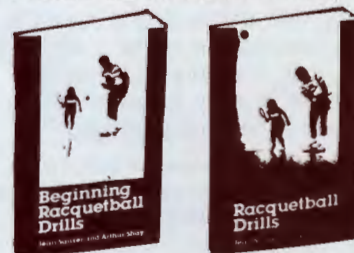
For example, if 34 players are entered, place the seeds as if there were 32 players in the tournament. Next count up the number of players there are above the last even round of eight. Since the last even round of eight was 32, you've got two extra players, which means you'll have two preliminary matches. Therefore, you must extract four players (two matches equals four players).

On which lines do you place the preliminary matches? Do *not* put them in such a place that the winner will automatically play a top seed. Do put them in such a place that the winner must play a lower seed. For an eight player tournament, the preliminary winner(s) should play into the third or fourth seeds. If there are more preliminary matches than seeds, place the extra preliminary matches against random opponents, but not one of the top two seeds.

Additionally, you should balance the top bracket for everyone in the bottom bracket. Preliminary matches should be placed so that they are on the same line in both halves of the draw, with the same number or one more or less in each half.

Any questions or topics you would like covered in this monthly column should be addressed to Dan Bertolucci, *National Racquetball*, 1800 Pickwick Ave., Glenview, IL 60025. ●

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT



Prof racquetball player/instructor Jean Sausser and the U.S. Racquetball Assn's official photographer Arthur Shay have teamed up to outline a series for the beginning and intermediate players. The step-by-step format allows players to improve use of court time while practicing alone or with an opponent.

Contemporary Books, Dept. RN
180 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60601

Please RUSH:

_____ copy(ies) BEGINNING RACQUETBALL DRILLS (5928-1) \$3.95

_____ copy(ies) INTERMEDIATE RACQUETBALL DRILLS (5926-5) \$3.95

My check/money order for \$_____ is enclosed.

Add \$1.25 postage/handling. Ill. & Cal. residents add 6% sales tax.

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New Products

AMF Voit Introduces Nova III

AMF Voit has introduced Nova III, a new graphite racquet designed for strength and power and touted as "the affordable graphite racquet."

Weighing only 250 grams, the new Nova III is constructed of 10 percent graphite, 20 percent fiberglass and 70 percent nylon, the optimum combination of materials for maximum power and strength.

Nova III's flexible quadraform head shape means that players can enjoy racquet flexibility plus durability.

The AMF Voit Nova III also features the exclusive, patented stitched bumper guard. The guard is permanently fixed in a balanced position at the time of stringing. Because the vibrations are absorbed by the nylon bumper, not by the frame, players gain additional control advantages.

Nova III's top-grade leather grip comes in a 4" size.



AMF Voit Introduces Nylon Tote Bag

A new, stylish nylon tote bag with many convenient features for the active player has been introduced by AMF Voit, Inc.

The new, RBT-9 Tote Bag is constructed of black, para-pack nylon for a sporty, yet durable, look. It features a full-length nylon zipper for easy access and inner wet pocket to hold moist clothing.

The 20" x 9" bag features a soft, nylon shoulder strap with leather patch for easy carrying. The new tote bags are packed two per case.

For more information, contact AMF Voit, Inc., 3801 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, Calif., 92704, or by phoning 714/546-4220.



Bancroft Activewear

Exquisite new activewear, designed and produced in Italy, is being introduced by Bancroft Sporting Goods Company, Woonsocket, RI. The line is basically suited for tennis and racquetball, but many of the styles are appropriate for other sports or casual wear.

The quality of the clothing is extraordinary, and the styling which utilizes a color theme of white, red, navy, and sky blue is exceptionally attractive. The activewear line is comprised of men's and women's shirts, shorts, sweaters, velours, and warm-ups; and the women's line also includes skirts and a dress.

Turned Cuff Anklets from Comfort Cushion Socks

The Comfort Cushion Mills division of Tennis Togs introduces a new Turned Cuff Anklelet, as pictured above. The Ladies Socks are designed for a youthful sports look, and are ideal for tennis, rac-



quetball, volleyball, running, cheerleading and other sports activities.

The Cuffed Anklets are made of Hi Bulk Orlon and Nylon in proportions of 85% Orlon and 15% Nylon. They are available in all white or white with two stripes of Navy/Navy, Light Blue/Light Blue, Kelly/Kelly, or Red/Red.

As with all socks from Comfort Cushion Mills, they are guaranteed against any manufacturing defects and are durable for long wear even after repeated washings.

For more information, write Tennis Togs, Inc., 2520 N. W. Second Avenue, Boca Raton, Florida 33432 or call 305 368-3660, or out of state call the toll free WATS line, 800 327-5012.



Dunlop Introduces New A-Player™ Racquetball

Dunlop Sports Company has introduced its new A-Player Racquetball that offers players more consistency in both rebound and playability and longer product life than conventional racquetballs.

The technologically-advanced A-Player is a high-bounce pressureless ball that achieves exceptional control and accuracy. Each individual ball must meet stringent manufacturing requirements for performance, durability and appearance. A-Player is Dunlop's commitment as a rubber specialist company to the rising consumer demand for high-performance products.

For further information regarding the A-Player Racquetball and the special introductory offer, contact your local Dunlop representative. Personalized A-Player racquetballs are also available.

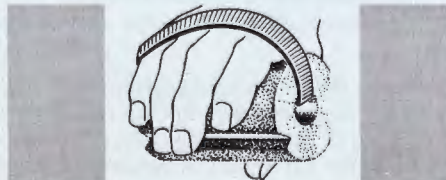
New Therapeutic Hand Exerciser

This new therapeutic hand exerciser is great for anyone who needs physical therapy of the hand as well as arthritis sufferers who must exercise regularly.

It is also great for anyone who wants to keep their hand muscles in tone and flexible.

When used by arthritis sufferers a small amount of arthritis pain ointment can be applied to the therapeutic hand exerciser. After using exerciser it can be easily cleaned in minutes.

The actual material contained in each Therapeutic Hand Exerciser is a special flexible foam body that offers a controlled resistance to muscles plus an adjustable velcro strap that adjusts the Therapeutic Hand Exerciser to any hand.



Upcoming Events

Prime Time Expands Super Bowl III

Trips to Acapulco, Toronto and New York City will be among the \$10,000 in prizes that will be won at the new and improved Super Bowl III amateur racquetball and handball tourney, officials announced today.

"Super Bowl III will be the exciting anchor event in a 10-day celebrity sports and entertainment festival being held January 15-24, 1982, at Killshot, Ltd. in northwest suburban Bloomingdale and co-sponsored by K Mart and AMF Voit," said Gary Danno, president of Prime Time Promotions, the Oakbrook Terrace sports promotion firm organizing the festival.

"This year's event is important for several reasons," Danno said. "It marks K Mart's entry into the sports of racquetball and handball as a major sponsor.

And it marks a major expansion and refinement of our Super Bowl concept.

"Not only will there be another hands vs. racquet battle of sexes exhibition match and great amateur racquetball and handball competition, but there will be a variety of sports, media and entertainment celebrities and an unusual amount of off-court fun and entertainment throughout the tournament," he said.

The hands vs. racquet battle of the sexes, sponsored this year by AMF Voit, will feature perennial USHA professional National Champion Naty Alvarado, against 1981-82 WPRA President Francine Davis, a top touring racquetball pro from Montclaire, N.J.

For further information contact Prime Time Promotions at (312) 932-8447.



Naty Alvarado

Fran Davis

Classified Ads

FOR SALE: San Diego Racquetball Club, Net \$50,000/year; \$50,000 down. 714/283-6246, I. Resnick

FOR SALE: Racquetball club and spa-sunny Southwest. Ideal for owner-manager operation. \$330,000, terms available. Call Mike Jacobs, 505/437-4991.

WANTED: Club Manager—10 Court, Bar/Lounge Facility. Send Resume to: Racquetplace, Inc. P.O. Box 06084, Ft. Myers, FL 33906-6084



A \$3,500 lesson For 'The Prince'

by Dick Squires

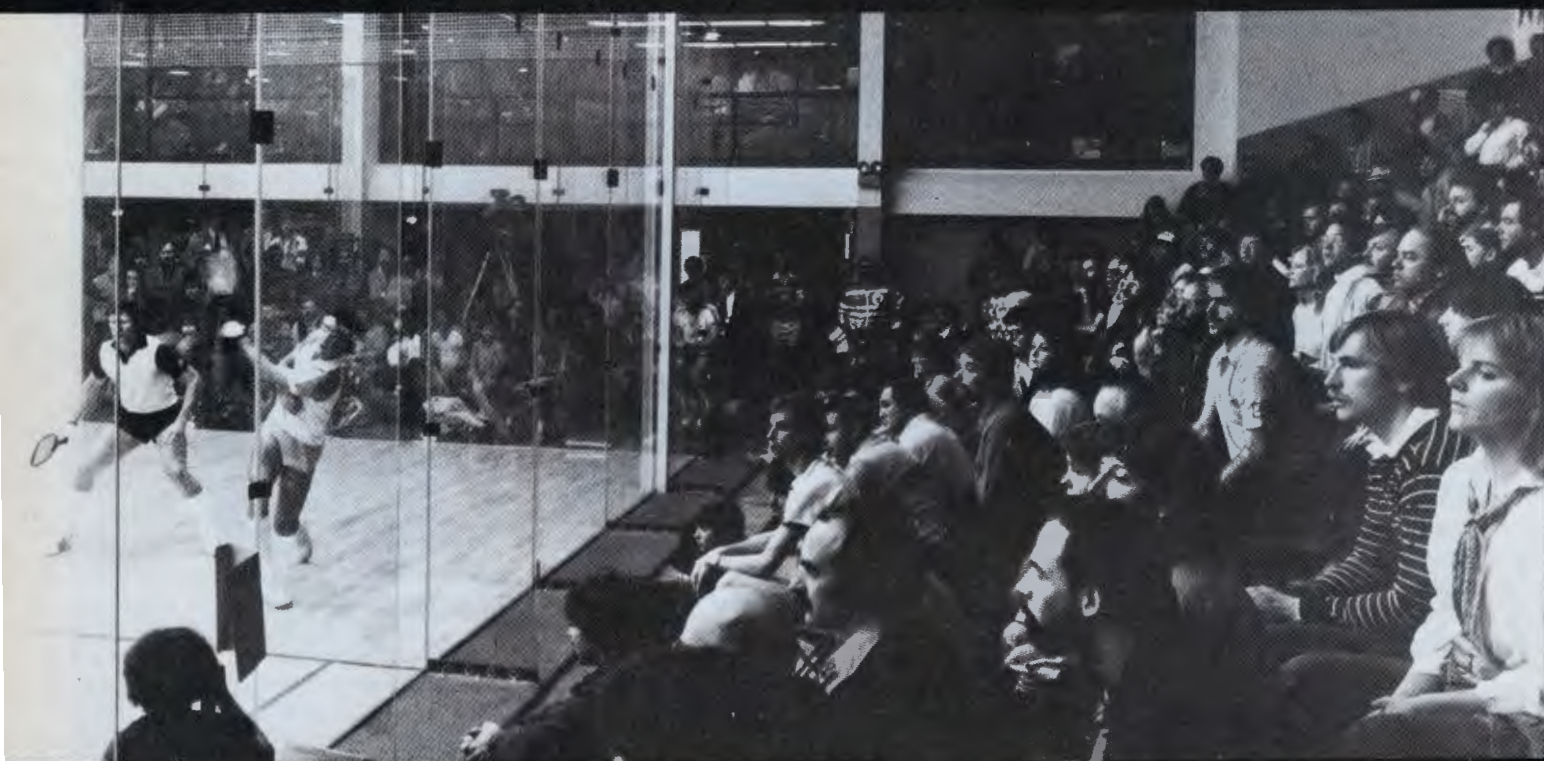
The King, Marty Hogan, came to New Haven, Connecticut's Downtown Racquet Club in November not just to play racquetball but to win the tournament. The event was the third of six tour-stops of the 1981-82 \$200,000 Catalina Pro Classic Series.

Blame it on his peripheral business obligations, or on the fact that he has reigned supreme for four years in competition, or on the slower AMF Voit Rollout Bleu ball, the truth remains that he had

been beaten by both Jerry Hilecher and 20-year-old rookie, Scott Hawkins, in the two previous Catalina Championships at Westminster, CA and Burnsville, MN.

Besides being somewhat of a smarting blow to this great champion's pride, there had been some talk around the tour locker-rooms that Mighty Marty was vulnerable and no longer unbeatable. His seeming invincibility was in question.

Also at stake were lucrative contracts with such companies as DP Leach Indus-



Full galleries were the norm in New Haven. Here the fans look on during the championship match as Harnett rips a forehand against Hogan.

tries and the tour's overall sponsor, Catalina Sportswear. Charlie Drake, of Leach, who had sold the Catalina people on both underwriting the tour and on Marty Hogan, was getting concerned. There was a note of exigency in his voice when he said he was definitely going to be in New Haven for the tournament. *"Marty's just got to start winning again. There's too much at stake."*

Round of 16

The first day's matches started out fairly predictably. The touring pros all advanced to the quarter-finals by making mince meat of the Northeastern qualifiers. Rich Wagner, Craig McCoy and Mike Yellen administered straight game lessons respectively to Jim Cascio, a Bricktown, New Jersey teenager, Ruben Gonzalez, former handball great from Staten Island, and Steve Ginsberg, the U. of Maryland student from Baltimore. None of these outstanding qualifiers won more than six points a game in the new 3 out of 5 11-point format.

The sole qualifier to hold his own was Rochester, New York's 17-year-old Mike Levine, who had won the previous weekend's qualifying tournament. He played a poised, marvelous match against Mesa, Arizona's Don Thomas before wilting in the fifth and deciding game. Proving he will be a formidable player to reckon with if he gets the chance, Mike succumbed to Thomas 11-9, 3-11, 4-11, 11-9, 3-11.

Jerry Hilecher ran through John Egerman, Dave Peck knocked off Doug Cohen, who bravely took his straight game loss without making excuses about his painful back. Hogan advanced with a rather lackluster and lackadaisical 4-game triumph over Greg Peck.

Except for the Levine-Thomas encounter, the only other close matchup in the initial round occurred between two of the travelling tour's youngest gladiators, 8th ranked Scott Hawkins, 20, of Santa Clara, California, and the 17 year-old high school student, Bret Harnett, from Las Vegas, ranked 11th and 1981's "Rookie of the Year." They are friends and had never vied against each other on the tour. It turned out to be a dilly!

Hawkins took the first seesaw game 11-9 and then blew Harnett off the court 11-2 in the second. It looked at this stage to be a routine walkaway for the slender Californian.

Then a funny thing happened. the youthful Nevadan started executing a series of devastating roll-outs from deep in the back court, especially off of his left-handed backhand down the right side



The Hogan backhand. Wrist cocked, eyes peeled to the ball, body moving into the shot, and you know it'll be a kill in the front, left corner.

wall. After the one-minute rest period following the second game blow-out, Harnett was a completely different player. He "bagelled" Hawkins in the third and annexed the first five points of the fourth before his 16 consecutive point streak ended. At 8-all Hawkins missed a set-up and Bret tied the contest with an 11-8 win.

For some inexplicable reason Scott persisted on serving to the southpaw's backhand. This is Harnett's best stroke, and Bret kept hitting grooved winners. With momentum in his favor the teenager cruised to an 11-4 win in the fifth.

Quarter-finals

The opening quarter-final round match on Friday should have been an omen of things to come. Old work horse, fifth-seeded Craig McCoy, who had been crisp and convincing in his 6-3-6 massacre of Gonzalez, proved his game is once again together by upsetting a rather listless and submissive Mike Yellen, who is second seeded on the tour. The final scores were 3-11, 11-4, 11-9, 11-7.

This was followed by the best match of the tournament. Third ranked Dave Peck against Harnett. The favored 24-year-old Texan took the first game at 4, but the kid from Vegas won six straight from 5-all in the second to tie the match. Again Peck took command with a one-sided 11-3 annexation of the third, but Harnett bounced right back to square the match with an 11-5 win in the fourth.

The full house of Connecticut spectators were then treated to a spinetingling tie-breaker that made the bleacher area surrounding the club's glass-walled championship court sound like fight fans attending a heavyweight title bout. Peck jumped off to a 5-0 lead only to see it shrink to 8-6. Then it was 10-7 and Peck had Match Point. Three times he was denied, however, and the mature, tenacious Harnett pulled off some magnificent gets to tie the tie-breaker at 10-all. A miracle, hard-hit pinch shot climaxed an exquisite victory for Harnett and a crushing loss for Peck.

The crowd was still gasping when the itinerant tour's newest father (with a 1½ week-old baby daughter), Don Thomas took to the court against the veteran "bad boy," Jerry Hilecher. So what happened? The Arizonian merely played spectacular racquetball and singed Hilecher in the first two games, 11-7, 11-6.

Thomas looks like a winner on the court. His athletic physique and dark, good looks sets females' hearts aflutter, and his demeanor is impeccable. Hilecher, on



Craig McCoy leans into a forehand during his semi-final loss to Hogan.

Acrobatic Don Thomas jumps out of the way of a Harnett forehand during their semi-final battle.



Thomas moves in to cover Jerry Hilecher's backhand kill attempt in their semi-final match.



the other hand, sulks, yells at officials, and does not look like the stupendous player that he really is. Consequently, the gallery loudly applauded when Thomas won points, and the only applause Jerry earned came from two people in the stands—his ever-present mother and father.

Although Hilecher did manage to annex the third game at 4, this just was not his day. The third upset in a row in the quarters occurred when Thomas finally won the fourth game at 6, on his fourth attempt at Match Point.

As always, the final match of the evening involved Hogan. His opponent, the stylist Rich Wagner, was considered capable of still another upset. Even though Wagner ran off the first five points, Marty was determined to stay out of trouble. The final scores were 11-8, 11-1, and 11-10, and even the last game was not as close as might be assumed. Hogan held Match

Point at 5 before finally nailing it away at 10-all.

Semi-finals

Some people were now beginning to nickname Harnett "The Prince," as heir-apparent to Hogan's throne. He was pitted against the gallery favorite, Don Thomas. What his following was unaware of, however, was that Thomas had been fighting a lingering intestinal malady and much of his strength and fervor had been sapped.

In a dazzling display of icy indifference to his adversary's queasy stomach, Harnett slashed out an 11-2, 11-8, 11-4 conquest to enter his first finals (surely not last) of the year. At this point many of the more astute watchers were likening him to Marty Hogan six years ago. He appeared to have everything—a wide repertoire of shots, poise, patience, killer instinct, and a competitive zeal that is rare in one so young.

The other penultimate round brought together last June's finalists in the Nationals played at Tempe, AZ, McCoy and Hogan. When Marty took the first two games at 8 and 0, it appeared the fans would be getting home early on this Saturday night. But, lo and behold, Hogan started hitting balls high and out in the center of the court, and McCoy's too good a player not to take advantage. Beneath Craig's somewhat stolid veneer lies a quiet determination and experience garnered over several years of competitive play. He's too talented to toy with, and before Marty could pull up his game, McCoy had stolen the next two stanzas, 11-3, 11-3.

The fifth game was a superb exhibition of professional racquetball at its mesmerizing best. Gone from Hogan's countenance was that boyish, impish grin. He was peeved at himself for letting McCoy back into the match.

Going into the deciding frame McCoy had outscored Hogan 30 to 28. Behind 6-1 Craig did something that certainly should go into the record book. He *aced* the mighty Marty three straight times to come up to 6-4. That was his last kick, however, before exiting to resounding applause which acknowledged his fine performance. Hogan knew he had been in a fight before staggering into his first finals of the year, 11 to 7.

Finals

So, on a cold, sunshiny, autumnal Sunday afternoon The King was pitted against The Prince who had definite designs on the incumbent monarch's throne. And the way brash Bret had been playing, few people doubted his ability to succeed in his ambitious quest. One person did, however. During a television interview Hogan was asked what he thought of Harnett's chances against him. He replied: *"He's very mature and talented for being just 17. Within a couple of years I would say he will be a real threat to me."*

In the opening stage of the match Marty probably wished he had not made such a comment. It could have been 1983 as Bret ran off the first 7 points before Hogan finally won the serve. The gallery was buzzing with disbelief. After winning his first point Hogan wryly remarked to the stands: *"There goes his shut-out."*

As if stunned by an errant uppercut the champion steeled himself and the transition to vintage Hogan was a memorable sight to see. Gracefully wielding his racquet like a machete, the proud champion began to execute the kind of masterful shots that have made him professional

racquetball's first and only millionaire. Mortals just don't hit such a high percentage of meteoric-like roll-outs from deep in the court, or make so many impossible retrievals. And not only does he get to seemingly ungettable balls, but he turns them into winners!

Revvng up like a fine-tuned racing car Marty duplicated Bret's achievement by tying the score at 7. Then, as all true champions are capable of doing, he snuck the next few critical points and stashed the first game into the hip pocket of his Catalina playing-shorts, 11 to 8.

As if admonishing his subordinate's impudence, Hogan in the second game put on an exhibition that showed the fans—and The Prince—beyond any shadow of a doubt why he has been, by far, the best racquetball player on this planet. It was almost as if he was out on the court all alone and merely practicing the basic strokes. His powerfully-hit roll-outs up and down either side wall, or deep crosscourts were unanswered, as were his corner-shots that splatted and cracked against the side and front walls with the acceleration of rifle bullets. At that moment The Prince undoubtedly wished he had encroached upon someone else's courtyard. The second game count was an 11 to 1 lacing.

Proving, however, he possesses the tenacity that creates future champions, the undismayed Harnett returned to the fray and, once again, repeated his feat of the first game. the southpaw ripped off seven straight points. At this stage you couldn't help but wonder if Hogan, for the sake of the crowd, would let up slightly and carry the kid for a while—play a so-called "customer's game."

No way! That is precisely how he gets himself into trouble, and you could see the deadly determination in his face as he finally won the serve. But Harnett was not going to allow the game to slip away as it did in the first. He hung tough and stretched his third game lead to 9-2. The packed gallery wanted a four, perhaps even a five-game finals. Hogan, however, didn't see it, or want it, that way.

Always stronger and as dangerous as a cornered cobra when under pressure, Marty refused to coast and let the third game go. Again came the onslaught of an awesome assortment of shots. There were classic roll-outs mixed with corner shots, ceiling balls, a kalideoscopic array of varying serves and even a deftly-placed straight drop shot that almost separated Bret's feet from his sneakers.

The Hogan comeback was an inexorable as a runaway 18-wheeler going brakeless down a steep incline. 3-9, 4-9, 5-9,

6-9, 7-9, 8-9, 9-9, and the fans all the time were yelling, pleading with Harnett to somehow stem the tide and win the next two points.

At 9-all a perspiring Hogan, ever the showman, turned to the gallery and quipped: "Now I'll probably lose it 11-10." It got a loud guffaw, but it was doubtful that anyone believed him. For the first time during the four-day event Marty Hogan was wrong. He took the next couple of points for an 11-9 victory and the match. He had won his first tournament on the Catalina circuit.

The kid had not played tight or been overawed by his famous adversary. He had, as a matter of fact, played well, had scared the H out of Hogan, had twice led 7-0 in two of the three games, and,

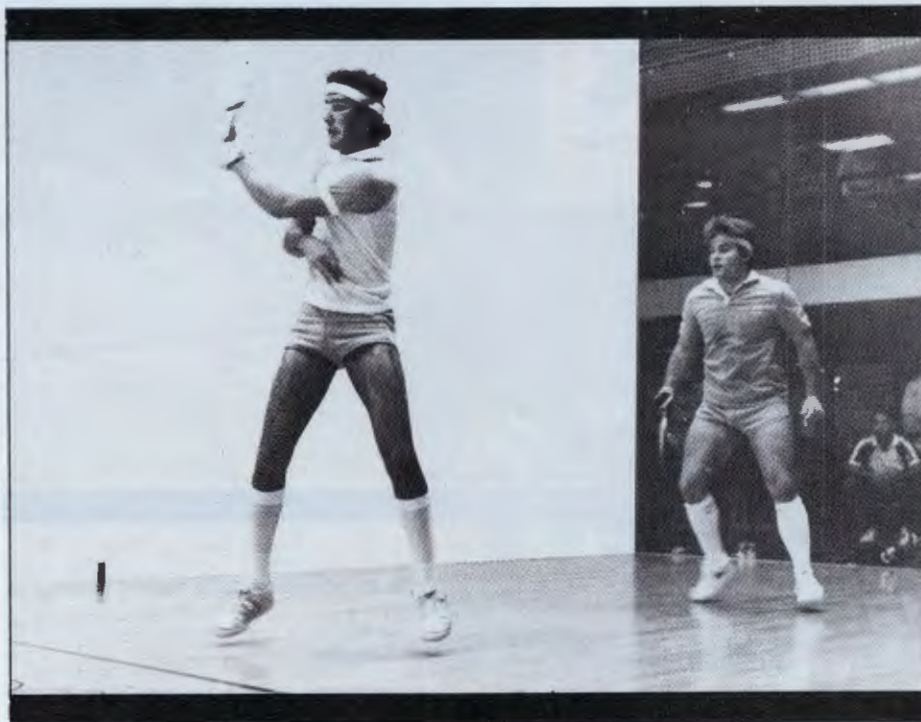
nonetheless, had been soundly trounced by racquetball's master. Humbled, but not humiliated. Defeated, but wiser.

When the \$5,500 first place check was presented to Hogan, he commended his beaten opponent. "Bret's got everything, and will rise right to the top as he gains experience."

Harnett's comment was, "It's great to be paid \$3,500 for a lesson from Marty. It will be a different story next time." There was not a lot of conviction in his voice.

Everybody loved the humor and quiet cockiness of The Prince. He had fared well against the monarch's majestic arsenal of strokes and was both richer and smarter.

Long live The King! Long live The Prince! ●



The force of Harnett's forehand stroke lifts him off the ground in his quarter-final win over Dave Peck.

Tournament Results

Please send tournament results and clear black and white action photos to Editor, *National Racquetball*, 1800 Pickwick Ave., Glenview, Illinois 60025. Type your results double spaced, including name, date and sponsor of tournament and place with scores listed in the style you see on these pages. Use last names only and allow two months or more for your tournament write up to appear. Tournament results will be published as space permits.

California

The Lodi Racquetball and Swim Club held an in-house tournament October 23-24. Lots of good racquetball, fun and friends, thanks to tourney director Ron Wilson.

Men's A 1st—Dave Powell, 2nd—Gary Alegre

Semi's: Brian Synowicki, Bob Synowicki

Men's B 1st—Dwight McCarroll, 2nd—Frank Eisner

Semi's: Steve Bandoni, Scott Abrahamson

Men's C 1st—Larry Geweke, 2nd—Dan Lambdin

Semi's: Steve Borges, Jeff Foust

Men's Novice 1st—Byng Forsberg, 2nd—Lynn Hieb

Semi's: Paul Miles, Jagmohan Bath

Women's B 1st—Susan Carl, 2nd—Ginny Vian

Semi's: Stephanie Wilson, Ann Zinck

Women's C 1st—Cori Morita, 2nd—Kim Kundert

Semi's: Kris Kates, Pillar Uong

Men's A Doubles 1st—Bruce Flom/Jeff Telschow
2nd—Willie Luntao/John Kirt

Semi's: Dave Powell/Mike Bond, Everet Low/Esther Thompson

Men's B Doubles 1st—Bandoni/Gary Heil
2nd—Mike Gallagher/Claude Vitali

Semi's: Flom/Ricardo Espinoza, Joe Ramos/Ron Walthers

Women's Doubles 1st—Denish Porter/Thompson
2nd—Pat Bender/Wilson

Semi's: Carl/Zinck, Kundert/Debbie Wall

Colorado

The Denver Central YMCA Fall Members Tournament was held November 16-20.

Men's B 1st—Stephen G. Bradley, 2nd—John Collins

Men's C 1st—Peter Niederman, 2nd David Nelson

Men's Novice 1st—Alan Pomeranz, 2nd—Michael Dern

Women's C 1st—Nona Nordstog, 2nd—Rhonda Ryan

Women's Novice 1st—Marcia Burgess, 2nd—Sherry Marshall

Georgia

SELF/Spalding Racquetball Classic, November 12-15, Racquetball Center, Atlanta.

Men's Open Sergio Gonzales d. Mike Ray 21-4, 21-17

Semi-finalists: Kevin Semenas and Mark Barrett

Women's Open Brenda Poe d. Caryn McKinney 21-8, 21-11

Semi-finalists: Beth Crawley and Babette Burkett

Men's B Dart McCarthy d. Dennis McGee 21-14, 21-11

Men's Seniors Jay Schwartz d. Wayne Vincent 21-9, 16-21, 11-9

Men's C Harvey Sussman d. Tim Edwards 21-15, 21-14

Women's C Micki Lewis d. Edith Jones

Indiana

Racquetball East, Indianapolis, hosted the Converse-Gatorade City Doubles Tournament November 7-8. All divisions played round-robin.

Women's Open

First: DeDe Freeman/Debbie Chaney

Second: Ann Gandolph/Barb Mohr

Third: Donna Betzner/Sue Kopp

Men's Open

First: Jim Knauer/John Knauer

Second: Charlie Gunn/Earl Dixon

Third: Jack Eckman/Mike Corbett

Men's B

First: Jerry Goodwin/Tom Nicholls

Second: Peter Mohr/Steve Butler

Third: Preston Conrad/Frank Mackell

Men's C

First: Jeff Beaver/Joe Ault

Second: Jim French/David Deluhery

Third: Lynn Carroll/Kevin Crook



High blood pressure. Treat it and live.

The only way to control high blood pressure is to treat it every day. Do whatever your doctor prescribes, but do it daily, no matter how you feel.

If you're on treatment, stay with it.

If you haven't started, do something about it, today.

And if you've stopped, don't be discouraged. You can get back on treatment and bring that pressure down.

High blood pressure. Treat it every day and live.

National High Blood Pressure Education Program.
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.
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New Mexico

Executive Sports Club at the Galeria hosted the New Mexico Racquetball Association Grand Prix Finals, October 2-4.

Men's Open

Finals: Mazaroff d. Neil

Semi-finals: Mazaroff d. Wolfenbarger; Neill d. Wright

Women's Open

Finals: B. Young d. Corsie

Semi-finals: B. Young d. Latham; Corsie d. Furaus

Racquetplaza Singles Shootout, October 9-11, Carlsbad, NM.

Men's Open Winner: Raul Canales

Women's Open Winner: Carol Pranka

Junior Boys Winner: Luis Miranda

New York

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute defeated the United States Military Academy, 6-5, in a racquetball team match Oct. 25 at West Point, N.Y.

Men's Singles

Ron Hyman (RPI) d. Mike Faessler (Army) 21-15, 21-8
Steve Malafsky (RPI) d. Mike Jones (Army) 21-8, 21-13
Dennis Callahan (Army) d. David Moore (RPI) 15-21, 21-17, 15-6
Darren Wilcox (Army) d. David Wunrow (RPI) 21-8, 21-1
Knute Leidal (Army) d. David Metzger (RPI) 21-17, 21-19
Neil Bressner (RPI) d. Jim Kenney (Army) 21-14, 20-21, 15-5
Jim Evans (Army) d. Tim Rayle (RPI) 15-21, 21-4, 15-9
Roy Maday (RPI) d. Mike Bittrick (Army) 21-20, 16-21, 15-14

Women's Singles

Pat Riley (RPI) d. Livey Jackson (Army) 21-3, 21-7

Doubles:

Hyman/Paul Boivin (RPI) d. Faessler/Callahan (Army) 21-15, 4-21, 15-13
Jones/Leidal (Army) d. Malafsky/Acie Vickers (RPI) 21-20, 21-17
Metzger/Moore (RPI) d. Evans/Joe Blanco (Army) 21-11, 17-21, 15-4

Natural Light Racquetball Classic, Allsport Fitness and Racquetball Club, Poughkeepsie, NY.

Men's Pro/Am

Finals: Mike Levine d. Ruben Gonzalez 21-10, 21-2

Women's Pro/Am

Finals: Francine Davis d. Barbara Maltby 21-14, 11-21, 11-2

Open Doubles

Finals: Levine/Léo Marsocci d. Gus Koumareles/Allan Lee 21-13, 21-14

Ohio

COURTROOMS I RACQUETBALL CLUB, Brunswick, Ohio, hosted the Frank White Ford Open November 6-8.

Mens Open Doubles

Bernie Greenberg/
Dominic Palmieri

Mens Open
Mens A Seniors
Mens B Seniors
Mens A
Mens B
Mens C
Mens C Doubles
Mens Novice
Mens Beginner Novice

Wayne Vincent
 Wayne Vincent
 Neil Spaulding
 Steve Finowski
 Jim Bolger
 Rob Ebeling
 Ron Dove/Les Cappama
 Mike Figlar
 R. Freiss
 Maureen Cavotta/Ed Verderber

Mixed Doubles

Womens Open
Womens A
Womens B
Womens B Doubles
Womens C
Womens Novice

Karen Conlin
 Chris Fischer
 Mary Lakatos
 M. Lakatos/Sue Rudo
 Linda Austin
 Joanne D'Isidoro

Oklahoma

1st Annual Petroleum Industry "GUSHER" Racquetball Tournament, hosted by American Professional Athletic Club, Oklahoma City.

Beginner

1st—Heath Clinton
 2nd—Dave Stelter
 3rd—Larry Williamson

Intermediate

1st—Jim Edmonds
 2nd—Moe Moddrell
 3rd—Jeff Dahlberg

Novice

1st—Pete Kochis
 2nd—Jane Brownlee
 3rd—Johnny Gibson

Advanced

1st—Kirk Webster
 2nd—Britton Piper
 3rd—James Mericle

Pro

1st—Ken Smith
 2nd—Kevin Chambliss
 3rd—Marc Sanford

Wisconsin

The Highlander Racquet Club, Brookfield, WI hosted the Highlander/Pepino's Open on October 30-31.

Men's Open

Semis: Dan Mohr d. Pay Hay 21-15, 21-8
 Dieter Schmidt d. Tom Frenkel 21-16, 21-8

Finals: Schmidt d. Mohr 21-12, 12-21, 11-9

Men's B

Semis: Chuck Ksicsinski d. Hank Steinmiller 21-18, 21-16
 Jim Moreland d. Elliot Papermaster 21-19, 21-19

Finals: Ksicsinski d. Moreland 21-1, 21-8

Men's C

Semis: Ken Adamec d. Steve Hartman 21-6, 21-5
 Kevin McAllister d. Matt Thompson 21-1, 21-7

Finals: McAllister d. Adamec 21-7, 21-10

Men's Novice

Semis: Tim Thompson d. Bill Sidwell 21-15, 21-13
 Patrick Ryan d. Tony Susa 21-8, 21-7

Finals: Ryan d. Thompson 21-16, 21-20

Women's C

Semis: Angela Casper d. Chris Lambrecht 21-17, 21-20
 Kris Gruber d. Jan Mettin 21-16, 14-21, 11-10

Finals: Casper d. Gruber 21-13, 21-15

Women's B—Round Robin

1st—Rozanne Sobich
 2nd—Bev Kappel

Saudi Arabia

First Saudi Arabian Nationals

The finest racquetball players in Saudi Arabia convened at Madinat Yanbu Al-Sinaiyah October 29-30 for the Kingdom's first national racquetball tournament. The Royal Commission for Jubail & Yanbu hosted the event in their modern, new glass back-walled courts. The new Yanbu Holiday Inn sponsored the tournament and provided valuable prizes to the winning players.

The open, Women's and Senior's singles attracted 48 players from throughout Saudi Arabia, representing teams from such organizations as Bechtel, Aramco, Saudi Parsons, Lockheed, Shobokshi, Raytheon and the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, as well as others. The glass walls gave over 200 spectators a window on the action.

The Open Singles, which was considered as the biggest event of the two days, was won by Richard Poppe of Yanbu, who defeated Tom Abney from the eastern province 21-12, 21-14. The semi-finalists were Tom Elkins of Bechtel and David Guerra of Raytheon.

The Women's Open was won by Debby Wigton who defeated Deone Atkinson 21-12 and 21-14. Their families are employees of Aramco and Lockheed, respectively. Claire Leslie and Betty Lapham, both of Yanbu, reached the semi-finals.

The Senior's tourney was also packed with top-class players. Paul Buezek of Jubail won over Ed Barksdale of Lockheed in a 70-minute final 21-10 and 21-19. John Church of Middle East Technical Services and Said Nammari of Yanbu were in the semi-finals.

Each of the winners was presented an expense paid week stay at luxurious Holiday Inn hotels, in Cairo for Richard Poppe, Khor Fakkan, UAE for Debby Wigton and Bahrain for Paul Buezek. Ashraf Khalil, Holiday Inn Sales Manager made the awards at a pool-side banquet on Friday night.

Jim Keith, President of the Yanbu Red Sea Racquetball Club gave each of the contestants a special tournament shirt and the Runners-Up received a new racquetball racquet. He said that more courts were being constructed at Madinat Yanbu Al-Sinaiyah and hoped that the success of this first national tournament would lead to holding more regional and national meets in the coming years. Racquetball has definitely established itself as part of the Saudi Arabian sports scene with the success of this first national tournament.

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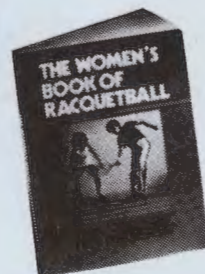
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JahnCourt Racquetball Inc.
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Central Lake, MI 49622

Oakwood Racquetball Club
23670 W. Wiley Canyon Rd.
Valencia, CA 91355

Olympic Health Club
8701 Highway 59-T
Ft. Smith, AR 72901

Plaza Racquet Club
Route 22 West
Union, NJ 07083

Pleasure Park
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Route 8, Highway 397 South
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Racquetball Northwest
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Coordination Class

Young Kids Learn More than Racquetball

by Rosemary Jeffrey



Two-year-old Marisa's eyes sparkle and her hands wave as she dances into the court followed by her brother Lyle who, at the mature age of five, is quick to tell me that he will really hit the ball hard today because he has on his Superman underwear. Several other preschoolers come bouncing in close behind them, watching out for Eric and Dominic who are in high gear and ready to play. Elaine and Mandy enter and wait for me to notice their new shorts. And here comes Erin on a dead run, only to be yanked to a screeching halt by ponytailed Kara who tells him to get in the circle, "or else". Here we have the new generation racquetball players of Columbia City Racquet Club in St. Helens, OR.

The club is a new family oriented facility along the Columbia River Highway between Portland and the Oregon coast. Drawing from a population of 14,000 people in surrounding communities this club is designed to promote health, fun and fitness for families. To me this means starting preschool children in classes that

develop hand-eye coordination and prepare them for the junior racquetball classes that follow. For them today's fun is the stepping stone to tomorrow's racquet skills.

I derived the idea for the class from watching my own two children when they first started playing in the racquetball court. After hitting the ball with their racquets for a while they would drop the racquets and make up their own games, throwing the balls around the court.

Through their self-styled games they were developing the hand-eye coordination so essential to any court sport, along with footwork, quickness, agility and body control. Throwing the small blue balls helped them develop a natural swing and wrist snap that was later transferred to handling a racquet. As they began to spend more time playing with their racquets, I noticed a marked improvement in their skills. It soon occurred to me that with the current emphasis on the relationship between coordination and reading, teaching classes in hand-eye coordination would help children's development in school as well as sports.



I enlisted the help of Cindy Diederich, a visual therapist in an optometrist's office. Cindy has had extensive training in visual therapy and a lot of experience in working with children who have visual problems. She agreed to co-teach with me. Cindy knew how much visual therapy could help children with eye problems and was anxious to see what effect similar activities would have on children with normal vision. The question for both of us was *"Could we make a noticeable improvement in the hand-eye coordination of preschoolers that would enhance their learning skills and increase their body control?"* Within a few weeks the Hand-eye Coordination Class became a vital part of the overall program in our club.

The Hand-eye class meets three times a week for three weeks. Realizing the short attention span of preschoolers we find it best to limit each class to a half hour. Since continuity and frequency are important in measuring progress, we stress to parents the need for regular attendance. Class begins with circle games centered around making the body stop and start, change directions and alter speed and height. Hopping on one foot and then the other, running fast and slow,

starting and stopping to a whistle, and moving in circles make the children aware of their body's capabilities. The children then walk on a floor beam while looking straight ahead at pictures on the wall. As they learn to walk without having to look at their feet, they pretend that the red service box is in the middle of the ocean and if they fall off the line, they will fall in the water.

The class then moves into big ball activities. Each child gets his or her own ball to throw, catch, kick and run after. In working with the big balls I realize that the children don't watch the balls closely because they can rely on touch. Coupled with that is the fact that Cindy and I are talking to them encouragingly with smiles on our faces, causing the children to look at us instead of the balls. It makes us wonder if we would have more success with a frown and a yell! Instead we follow up the big ball activities with balloons. Success! The children have to watch the weightless balloons rise and fall if they are to catch them. When children first attempt to catch balls, they trap them in their arms and hands. It is more difficult for children to trap balloons in their hands. Through practice with both balls and balloons the children are soon watching and catching them.

Columbia City Racquet Club Manager Rosemary Jeffrey and Visual Therapist Cindy Diederich offer a three week Hand-Eye Class in a racquetball court. Children walk the red service line, taking care not to fall into the "court floor ocean", before they hit Nerf balls and catch balloons.



Next we turn to games played with small blue racquetballs. The children delight in throwing, catching, bouncing and chasing their balls around the court. They are unaware that they are gaining the court sense that we adults work so hard to achieve. Other activities incorporated into the class include bean bag toss, ring toss, dart throwing and the marble game. In the marble game each child gets a cake tin and a big marble; they track the marble with their eyes as they tilt the pan back and forth. The class comes to a close with the favorite activity of the day, hitting a Nerf ball with a racquet. The ball is suspended by a string from a pole hanging from the court wall. The children swing at the ball and delight in making it sail around as they prepare to hit it again.

At the end of the first three week session we see a marked improvement in all the children. When we offer the class again, we have some of the same children plus the ones who were there for the first time.

There is quite a difference in the skill level and physical ability of the children who have already taken the class. In many cases the skills of three-year-olds who have already taken the class are equal to those of four and five-year-olds in the class for the first time. This reinforces our beliefs that early attempts at developing hand-eye coordination are beneficial.

If you are interested in starting a similar program, enlist the help of resource people in your club and community. The classes enhance the overall program and give an added dimension to your club. ●

A Program that Pays for Itself

Every six weeks during the school year since the Suncoast Courthouse opened in Clearwater, FL in 1979, 50 to 95 boys and girls ages six to 16 have taken part in the club's junior program.

Lee Duda, corporate general manager of The Courthouses, the company that runs the Suncoast and Tampa Bay clubs, says the costs involved in the program are worth every penny the club invests.

"The costs include court time (initial instruction on one court, practice and play on two courts for a minimum of two hours), payment for instructors (two instructors per lesson), free eyeguards (approximately \$3.50 each), free T-shirts (approximately \$1.75 each, plus the cost of logos), trophies and court time for the final tournament."

The Courthouses also provide free use of racquets and special breaks on racquet purchase after the course. Duda says the programs at the Suncoast Courthouse and the Tampa Bay Courthouse, a smaller club with a more limited junior program, more than pay for themselves.

"You've got the kids coming in to play with their parents and kids coming in to play each other. Both the kids' and parents' word of mouth advertising about the program increases the club's potential for new members and private lessons. Pro shop sales go up with new players buying racquets and outfits."

"And many kids in the building at any time boosts our snack shop sales."

To receive a copy of the program at The Courthouses make a request on your club letterhead to Lee Duda, Corporate General Manager, The Courthouses, 2147 Pine Forest Dr., Clearwater, FL 33516.

Tiny Tot Academy

—Joe Zimmitti photo



Dorene Benoit and Timmy Lentine

At the Courtside of Cromwell in Cromwell, CT Racquetball Director Dorene Benoit presides over her Tiny Tot Academy where three to five-year-olds spend six weeks in hour and a half sessions that include racquetball instruction, games on court and lunch at the club's Broken Racquet Restaurant. For her special two hour summer sessions on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings Benoit charges each student \$12 a week. Benoit says the youngsters like *"the chance to do what they see the grownups doing all the time."*

Child's Version of the Game

Scott Shane, who learned to play in Mesa, AZ, when he was eight and his father was managing a racquetball club, was 12 when he wrote the following essay as an English assignment.

How To Play Racquetball

First you have to have two, three, or four players. Then you need some rackets and some racket balls. To start you have to put one player in front and one player in back facing the same way. Then the other player hits it against the wall and it bounces back, then the other player hits it and so on. The ball can only bounce one time and then the other player will have to hit it before it bounces twice. If the ball bounces twice for the back player the front player gets one point and if the ball bounces twice for the front player the back player and front player switch sides. ●

When Janet Sue Reid led a PeeWee Racquetball program at Spaulding Racquetball Blue Ridge Courts in Missouri, she designed her sessions to strengthen seven areas:

1. Self-esteem through consistent praise and success
2. Eye-hand coordination through tracking and hitting the ball
3. Awareness of sequential body movement in space
4. Knowledge of spatial relationships (understanding front, back, side, top, center, between, over, etc.)
5. Ability to follow directions
6. Attention span
7. Racquetball basics

Reid says *"you can't use positive reinforcement enough. The child should receive constant and consistent praise."*



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The Mathematics of Weight Control

by Dr. Marcus B. Sorenson

Obesity is the plague of mankind in our modern western society. Alcoholism, smoking, and drug abuse together do not create a problem which comes close to causing as much physical and mental grief as does obesity and overweight.

Obesity relates very closely to heart disease, diabetes, joint disease, vascular disease, accidents and suicide. Anyone who constantly fights a weight problem also realizes the devastating effect that an overweight condition has on mental health.

The real tragedy of the overweight condition is that a lack of understanding is basically responsible for the inability of most persons to successfully cope with the problem. True understanding is all that is necessary for the motivated person to become slim and athletic.

First, let's define obesity. A woman is obese when 25% or more of her total body weight is composed of fat. A man is obese when 20% or more of his total body weight is composed of fat. A woman is considered to be in excellent condition when 12% or less of her body weight is fat. For a man the figure is 8% or less.

Is obesity prevalent? In our society, one of every two women is obese at age 50. One of every three men is obese at the same age. When we look at the portion of our society who have body fat percentages which are higher than what is considered excellent (12% or 8% as just discussed) we will find that 80 to 90% of our society has more than the ideal amount of fat!

As director of the National Institute of Fitness, I have had the opportunity to measure hundreds of individuals for body fat percent. Clients beginning the National Institute of Fitness program average over 40% body fat. After staying at our reducing camp for periods of four to six weeks, our clients reduce this percentage to about 20%, and usually have lost 25 to 45 pounds. Among hundreds of adult non-clients who have also been measured for body fat, the average percentage has been over 20%, meaning that most individuals in our society are approaching obesity.

What can be done? Every issue of every woman's magazine comes out with a new diet that is the "ultimate" in causing rapid weight loss. The same publications carry absolutely ludicrous advertising for fat burning systems, miracle pills, sauna belts, vibrators and massagers, all of which claim to be the last word in ridding the body of that excess fat. The shameful thing is that the public buys and buys and buys, leaving common sense behind in the elusive effort to control what is a very simple problem. Faddistic and deceitful sales of weight loss methods are a multi-billion dollar industry which takes advantage of desperate people.

Other people react more intelligently by beginning to play racquetball or some other sport. Still, only a handful of individuals are ever successful at *losing and keeping off their excess pounds*.

The basic problem in weight control is one of education. If people really understood the mathematics of weight control, they could easily write their own successful prescriptions for losing weight and staying trim. The following facts are presented to clarify the effects of nutrition and exercise in weight control.

The body uses oil, in the form of fat, to store excessive calories. *When a person takes in more calories in food than he/she uses in activity, the result will be a storage of fat, and consequently a gain in body weight.* When calories used in activities are greater than calories taken in, the body will use some of the stored calories, *resulting in a loss of body weight.* When calories taken in are equal to calories expended—*body weight will not change.*



There are 3500 calories in one pound of stored body fat. Therefore, if a person wishes to lose that pound, he must use 3500 calories more than he takes in in a given period of time. He may do this by either taking in fewer calories or expending more.

The average American eats about one-half pound of oil per day, which is equivalent to 1700 calories. The oil is taken in as animal fats, such as steak, hamburger, cream, and butter. It is also consumed as vegetable fat such as cooking oil, margarine, peanut butter, nuts, olives and avocados.

Only a very small amount of oil (a few drops) is needed daily for good health. This amount can easily be obtained by eating a bowl of oatmeal in the morning. There is absolutely no need to add any oil to the diet as long as an individual eats a few vegetables and grains daily. If the average American stopped eating oils completely (other than in vegetables and grains) he/she would take in 620,500 fewer calories per year. *This translates into 177.3 pounds of body fat in one year!*

Rule #1 for controlling weight then, is: *Don't eat oils.* Avoid all fried foods, deep fried foods, pastries, cheese and other whole milk products. Also avoid nuts, avocados, olives, and fatty meats. Eat fish, poultry (without skin), whole grains, legumes, and vegetables instead.

Another problem in weight control is the excessive ingestion of sugar. Each person in our society eats about 120 pounds of the stuff per year. *This translates into another 60 pounds of body fat per year.* There is absolutely no need in human nutrition to take in *any* sugar whatever.

Rule #2 then, is to *eat no sugar.* Avoid candy, honey, cookies, pastries, malts and foods which use sugar as an ingredient. Eat from the same list of foods given in Rule #1.

The final problem in weight control is lack of activity to burn excess calories. A heavy bout of racquetball will burn about 600 calories per hour. If played daily, this translates to 60 pounds of body fat per year. A brisk 6 mile walk will do the same thing. At the same time, exercise of this type will depress the appetite making it much easier for you to avoid the oily and sugary foods which create obesity.

Rule #3 is to play at least one hard hour of racquetball *daily*, or do the equivalent



Caloric Expenditure For Various Activities & Body Weights (Per Hour)

Activity	Body Weight							
	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240
Basketball (half court)	204	236	268	302	334	368	402	436
Bicycling (6 mph)	220	244	288	332	376	420	468	512
Racquetball	426	495	563	632	701	770	839	910
Running (6 mph)	480	562	644	726	808	890	972	1050
Running (9 mph)	672	782	892	1004	1114	1224	1334	1448
Swimming (20 yards/min)	174	202	230	258	286	314	342	372
Swimming (40 yards/min)	420	492	564	636	708	780	852	924
Tennis	306	356	407	457	508	558	608	660
Volleyball	246	289	332	374	417	460	503	546
Walking (2 mph)	156	182	207	233	259	285	311	336
Walking (4.5 mph)	288	338	388	437	487	537	587	636

To determine pounds of body fat used per year in daily activity, move the decimal point one place to the left. *Example:* 910 calories used in playing racquetball every day for one year equals 91 pounds of body fat used in one year. 672 Calories used in running each day for one year equals 67.2 pounds of fat burned, etc.

in some other sport such as brisk walking (six miles) jogging, swimming, etc. Of the three rules, this one is crucial, since it will help you immensely to overcome the oil and sugar intake.

If living by these rules sounds too tough for you, you may as well give up on ever being slim and go buy a sauna belt with which to fool yourself, because you cannot succeed without a change in your lifestyle. If you are not willing to change, you will be like a few of our National Institute of Fitness clients who come to us in search of a magic cure rather than help and education in finding a workable solution to their weight problems.

Many of our clients lose well over 30 pounds in one month simply by playing racquetball, tennis and hiking. We feed them sugarless, oilless food on which they thrive as they shed the weight.

These people are willing to stick strictly to our plan because *they want to be slim and healthy*. If you really want to be slim and fit then you can easily succeed by following the rules set forth in this article.

Remember, 100 calories used daily in activity is equal to 10 pounds of body fat used per year. 200 calories per day equals 20 pounds of fat used per year and so on. The following chart will help you to determine the calories you will use in racquetball and some of your other favorite activities. Best wishes in your weight control efforts. ●

Dr. Sorenson is president of the National Institute of Fitness, a vacation weight loss program headquartered in Orem, Utah and a frequent contributor to National Racquetball.

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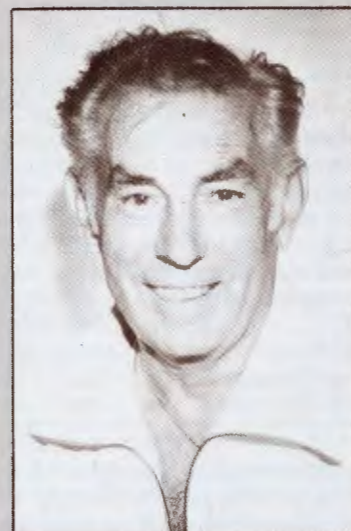
Soft Shots



Ron Brejtus works out of his Tempe, AZ studio creating "Soft Impressions," hand screened graphics on suede cloth, which he shapes with polyurethane fill.

Brejtus has been selling his designs to racquetball clubs, particularly in the southwest. The artist makes two traditional racquetball scenes—one in white and camel and the other in pearl and camel—and he also has provided club lounges with wall hangings ranging from a bottle of Perrier to a two scoop (chocolate and strawberry) ice cream cone.

70 on His 70th



Seventy racquetball games in seven days proved what kind of shape Jim Scott was in on his 70th birthday, which he celebrated in San Diego last May.

The Golden Master racquetball teacher raised \$1,500 for the National Kidney Foundation of Southern California by collecting 50 cents to \$15 from challengers he faced at clubs in and around San Diego. Scott traveled to the courts from May 23 through May 29, highlighting his effort May 28 with a challenge match on his birthday against Tom "Iron Man" Warren at Courtsports of San Diego. The Hob-Nob Restaurant provided carrot cake and champagne on May 28 and Leach supplied the Charlie Brumfield composite racquet that helped Scott display his ageless racquetball prowess.

Relief for the Uncurable



Miami's Irving Spero, a certified orthotist (one who rehabilitates an injured part of the body with an appliance) says there's no permanent cure for racquetball elbow. But he claims the "Tennis Elbow Splint" he designed relieves pain and allows active participation in the game for those suffering from epicondylitis.

The Spiro Tennis Elbow Splint, according to its designer, "relieves the pain of tennis or racquetball elbow utilizing a specially engineered alloy bar which absorbs shock and trauma that would normally travel up the arm and cause

tiny tears of the extension muscle located just below the elbow."

The splint is placed on the forearm at the wrist and below the elbow to secure and support the forearm muscles. Velcro closures fasten the splint to the wrist and forearm. The alloy bar also prevents slippage and reduces the vibration from off center hits. The lightweight splint does not restrict wrist and arm mobility.

For information about the Spiro Tennis Elbow Splint contact: Spiro Orthopedic, 1320 N. W. 119 St., Miami, FL 33167.

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