

# RACQUETBALL



RECORD-BREAKING  
NUMBERS AT THE



UNITED HEALTHCARE  
US OPEN  
CHAMPIONSHIPS



U.S. Racquetball Association  
1651 Mesa Avenue  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906-2917

**IN THIS ISSUE** **IRF WORLD  
JUNIOR  
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

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# IN THIS ISSUE



## ON THE COVER

Pro Singles Champions Paola Longoria & Kane Waselenchuk at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Championships.  
Photos by KSphotography

## STAFF

Mike Wedel - Executive Director  
Renée Isherwood - Director of Events & Operations  
Rachel Hyman - Membership Coordinator

## SUBMISSIONS

Racquetball Magazine welcomes submissions from our members and readers. Propose article ideas by email to: magazine@usaracquetball.com. All submissions are subject to editing.

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Rhonda Rajsich, Doug Ganim, Steven Harper, and Joe Hoffman at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN  
Photo By KSphotography

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## USA RACQUETBALL MISSION STATEMENT

*USA Racquetball, recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport, is committed to our members and the growth of racquetball from recreational play to international competition.*

## USA RACQUETBALL CORE VALUES

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## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS & TEAM QUALIFYING

All future National Championship details remain tentative until entry information is published.

### U.S. NATIONAL TEAM QUALIFYING

In an effort to help ensure that the top American racquetball players have an equal and fair opportunity to qualify for the U.S. National Team, USA Racquetball adopted changes to the qualification process which began with the 2017-2018 U.S. National Team.

While the process for qualifying for doubles on the U.S. National Team is the same, the singles qualification procedure is determined by performance on a weighted scale at three qualifying events:

- UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Pro Division
- U.S. Team Singles Qualifying Division at USA Racquetball National Doubles Championships
- U.S. Team Qualifying Division at USA Racquetball National Singles Championships

To learn more and for complete details, please visit: <http://www.teamusa.org/usa-racquetball/programs/team-usa>.

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BE CONSIDERED FOR A FUTURE ISSUE.



FROM THE  
Executive Director | By Mike Wedel

## National Headquarters

**Happy New Year!  
Welcome to 2020!**

**S**omeone asked me the other day, "What are you excited about for next year?" There's so much to be excited about in 2020, and on the brink of moving into a bright new year, let me share some of what's in store...



I am looking forward to completing the three-year Strategic Plan. We have assembled a group of 18 people who are experts in their areas and are passionate about racquetball. This group will gather in Colorado Springs in the first quarter of 2020 to spend two days discussing the best ways to improve our sport. The USOPC will guide us through the process. I appreciate the commitment and dedication of each person in this group, and I look forward to sharing the completed plan with our members so we can all work in the same direction.

The USAR staff is planning several new ways to communicate with you, our members. In addition to communicating with you, we recognize how important it is that we create new ways to hear from you. We want to hear your thoughts and ideas to ensure we are meeting your expectations. We need to be sure we are providing enough information that you feel comfortable with what USA Racquetball is doing and how we are utilizing the resources we have available.

The 2020 Racquetball Championship season is about to get started! Did you know that last year we had a record number of young athletes at the 2019 USAR National High School Championships? We are expecting another impressive turnout as we travel to Portland, Oregon. We are also

enthusiastic about going back to Texas for the USAR National Singles Championships. It will be the first time since 2009 that National Singles will be competed in Texas. We are going to Baton Rouge for the USAR Intercollegiate Championships and Fullerton (Anaheim) for the USAR National Junior Championships. And of course, to kick everything off, warm and sunny Tempe will once again be our destination for the USAR National Doubles Championships. See page 14 for the National Championship Schedule. I look forward to seeing you in 2020!

The Center for SafeSport is leading the way for USA Racquetball and many other sports organizations to stand together to protect athletes. USA Racquetball is proud to be able to partner with the Center for SafeSport to help educate our members on the many ways we can all work together to safeguard athletes from bullying; harassment; hazing; physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; and sexual misconduct.

The Center for SafeSport's mission is to make athlete well-being the centerpiece of our nation's sports culture through abuse prevention, education, and accountability.

Their vision is that every athlete will be safe, supported, and strengthened through sport.

- **Safe:** Athletes are protected from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- **Supported:** Athletes enjoy welcome, respectful environments, and diversity is actively embraced.
- **Strengthened:** Athletes use the skills they've learned in sport to contribute to the well-being of their communities. Every athlete thrives, both on and off the field of play.

There are so many things in the coming year that we can all be excited to be a part of. We know that for our sport to grow and expand, we all need to work together to bring in new players and bring back players who have left the game. A great goal for 2020 will be for every member to introduce one new player to the game or to coax a buddy back onto the courts. I look forward to hearing about these stories of success in the coming year!

USAR Staffers Rachel Hyman and Renéé Isherwood at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN  
Photo By KSphotography



# Board of Directors Update

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## By Dan Whitley

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!** There is a lot to be happy about at USA Racquetball. We are looking forward to a fun and exciting 2020. So much is happening!

As I mentioned in the last issue, the USA Racquetball Board of Directors now functions as a strategic board. I want to share some updates for our four primary focus areas:

- **Membership.** We recently increased USA Racquetball membership fees. This is our first increase in 11 years. We have rolled the \$3.50 processing fee into the price (as opposed to being an additional fee), and we have added the option of auto-renewal. Now it's significantly easier to maintain your membership and support USA Racquetball seamlessly. The ability to auto-renew is comparable to any online subscription service. When using auto-renewal, this increase essentially amounts to \$6.50/year, or only 54 cents a month. In addition, we have increased the value of the indoor membership by including a WOR (outdoor) membership. This gives our members access to more events, and there's no need to carry two memberships with two separate fees and two different expiration dates. No more cumbersome details. You will have one membership for everything!
- **Events.** (Indoor and Outdoor/State and National). As we enter the new year, we continue to recommend that event directors sanction their events early. There are so many marketing and awareness benefits to sanctioning your events months ahead of time. Establish your Fall tournament schedules now and ask your players to save the dates. As we enter our National Championships tournament cycle, look for an announcement in early 2020 introducing our new Director of National Championships. We are excited to add an additional member to our USA Racquetball staff. Also, as part of the membership change, local tournament directors will no longer have to pay the processing fees for memberships collected at local events. Remember, those fees are now rolled into the membership rate. With auto-renewal, you will also have fewer membership to collect at your tournaments. Another benefit!
- **US Team.** As you may have seen across multiple online platforms during the 4th quarter of 2019, USA Racquetball was accepting applications for a new US Adult Team Head Coach. Our US Team Committee has been working diligently to generate and process a pool of coaching candidates. Look for an announcement of our new Head Coach in early 2020, too!
- **US OPEN.** The 24th Annual US OPEN was a record-breaking phenomenal event. Doug Ganim and his team outdid themselves (as is the annual norm for that group). We are so proud of the event and what they provide to the racquetball family every year. There is no doubt that the 25th Annual US OPEN is going to be a one-of-a-kind special international event, unlike anything we have ever seen. Please save the date and make it a point to attend the US OPEN this year, October 7-11, 2020. Stay tuned for more updates about how racquetball's premier event will continue to be spectacular for years to come!

One more note. In September, Executive Director Mike Wedel and I attended the 10th Annual 3WallBall World Championships in Las Vegas. Congratulations to Mike Coulter and his 3WallBall "army" for creating such an inclusive atmosphere and legacy for the event. The STRAT hotel's support of the event allows an entire "club" of beautiful blue courts to be constructed and then dismantled annually on the parking lot across the street. (Outstanding hospitality is provided at The STRAT buffet, too!) The World Championships include 3-wall and 1-wall divisions in racquetball, handball, and paddleball. It's really unique to see the blend of cultures and communities for the three different sports. Mike and I had the opportunity to meet and reconnect with several WOR directors and players...it made for a great week. We can't wait to see what Year 11 will bring for this event and for WOR.

As we enter the New Year, I plan to work with the USA Racquetball Board of Directors to ensure information and updates on the initiatives we are working on are shared with USA Racquetball members, sponsors, and manufacturers. We look forward to feedback, collaboration, and support from our USA Racquetball members in the coming year.

Happy New Year, and see you on the courts in 2020!

# USA Racquetball Membership Rates and Auto-Renewal News

As most USA Racquetball members have already heard, effective January 1, 2020, USA Racquetball announced a membership fee adjustment along with some new features.

The full announcement letter can be found on USA Racquetball's website at [http://bit.ly/USAR\\_Membership](http://bit.ly/USAR_Membership)

## Some key points regarding this rate adjustment:

- USA Racquetball now offers the convenient option of Auto-Renewal for the Adult 1-Year membership type.
- Processing fees (\$3.50) are now included within membership fees and will not appear as an additional charge when renewing. Including the processing fees means that the Adult (1 Year) Auto-Renewal membership is increasing just \$6.50 per year.
- We are excited to announce that effective January 1, 2020, all indoor memberships, except for Limited Event Memberships (LEMs), will include a WOR (outdoor) membership at no additional cost.

## A few questions and answers about these changes and features:

### Q: WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME USA RACQUETBALL INCREASED MEMBERSHIP RATES?

A: USA Racquetball last raised membership rates on January 1, 2009 (11 years ago).

### Q: WHAT DOES USA RACQUETBALL MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT?

A: USA Racquetball has over 155,000 visitors to our website annually, with over 31,000 participants in over 550 state and local tournaments sanctioned in 2019; five national championships; and one international tournament each year. Additionally, USAR supports and manages the U.S. Adult and Junior National Teams that compete in international events. USA Racquetball provides financial assistance to state associations for grassroots campaigns via a rebate program based on state membership levels. Established programs for instructor development and referee certification are readily available. USAR offers five national championships around the country for all ages and skill levels and engages R2Sports to provide a tournament management system as well as individual membership profiles and rankings.

### Q: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USA RACQUETBALL MEMBERSHIP?

A: Members of USA Racquetball have the right to compete in USAR-sanctioned tournaments and the ability to view overall skill rankings and be ranked by age, state, and national. The R2Sports app provides the tools to track rankings, view membership profiles, and follow friends. Members receive travel discounts with our partners United, Enterprise, IHG, and others. Stay connected by interacting with the racquetball community on our social media platforms. Find leagues and tournaments around the country. And so much more!

### Q: WILL USA RACQUETBALL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDE THE WOR (OUTDOOR) MEMBERSHIP?

A: YES. As of January 1, 2020, WOR membership will be automatically added to all membership profiles (except Limited Event memberships) and show the same expiration date as Indoor membership.

### Q: WILL USA RACQUETBALL LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS INCLUDE WOR MEMBERSHIP?

A: YES. As of January 1, 2020, WOR lifetime membership will be automatically added to all USAR lifetime membership profiles.

### Q: WHAT IF I ALREADY HAVE BOTH MEMBERSHIPS: USAR INDOOR AND WOR OUTDOOR?

A: When current WOR memberships expire, your new WOR memberships will automatically be tied to indoor memberships. There will be no need to renew WOR membership as long as your USAR Indoor membership is current.

### Q: HOW DOES AUTO-RENEWAL WORK?

A: Beginning January 1, 2020, members will have the option to save on their annual membership by registering with an Auto-Renewal option. Log into your USA Racquetball membership profile on R2Sports.com and select Purchase Membership. Choose the option for Adult Membership Auto-Renew - 1 Year.

### Q: CAN I CANCEL THE AUTO-RENEWAL OPTION?

A: You will have the ability to cancel your Auto-Renewal 30 days prior to membership expiration. A series of reminder emails will be sent that will include a cancellation link.

### Q: DOES USA RACQUETBALL OR R2SPORTS RETAIN CREDIT CARD INFORMATION?

A: No. Neither USA Racquetball nor R2Sports have access to credit card information. Instead, that information is stored with Authorize.net, a credit card processing company.

# XXXI IRF World Junior Racquetball Championships



Junior Team USA  
Photo Courtesy of Cheryl Kirk

San José, Costa Rica

November 9-16, 2019

By Cheryl Kirk

The U.S. Junior Team Delegation (90 in all) at the IRF World Junior Racquetball Championships in San José was comprised of 29 players (14 boys and 15 girls, ages 9-19), 6 staff members, and 55 parents/grandparents/siblings/private coaches plus a few uncles and aunts!

Nathan Rykhus of California, who had qualified in Boys 10 in both singles and doubles, sustained a foot injury a few weeks before the event. His doctor advised him not to compete, and Nathan was not able to make the trip. This took the US Team player total from 30 to 29. However, Nathan was definitely there in spirit and his Question of the Day answers in the blogs were well articulated and enjoyed by all.

## PLAYERS AND STAFF

### GIRLS WORLD CUP TEAM

Nikita Chauhan, 18, California, Girls 18 Singles, Girls 18 Doubles (Erin Slutzy)  
Graci Wargo, 18, Florida, Girls 18 Singles

Annie Roberts, 17, Oregon, Girls 16 Singles, Girls 16 Doubles (Alondra Canchola)

Erin Slutzy, 17, Missouri, Girls 16 Singles, Girls 18 Doubles (Nikita Chauhan)

Alondra Canchola, 16, California, Girls 16 Doubles (Annie Roberts)

Heather Mahoney, 15, California, Girls 14 Singles

Ava Kaiser, 14, Minnesota, Girls 14 Singles, Girls 14 Doubles (Kareena Mathew)

Kareena Mathew, 14, Oregon, Girls 14 Doubles (Ava Kaiser)

### BOYS WORLD CUP TEAM

Micah Farmer, 19, Texas, Boys 18 Singles

Ben Baron, 19, Arizona, Boys 18 Singles

Dylan Pruitt, 18, Maryland, Boys 18 Doubles (Josh Shea)



Girls 14 & Under Gold Medal Winner Heather Mahoney  
Photo By Melodese Mahoney



Members of the Esprit Team with Tournament Mascot and Friends  
Photo By Cheryl Kirk

Timmy Hansen, 16, Florida, Boys 16 Singles, Boys 16 Doubles (Andrew Gleason)

Andrew Gleason, 16, Iowa, Boys 16 Singles, Boys 16 Doubles (Timmy Hansen)

Nikhil Prasad, 14, California, Boys 14 Singles

Vedant Chauhan, 15, California, Boys 14 Singles, Boys 14 Doubles (Josh Shea)

Josh Shea, 15, New York, Boys 18 Doubles (Dylan Pruitt), Boys 14 Doubles (Vedant Chauhan)

#### GIRLS ESPRIT CUP TEAM

\*Sonya Shetty, 13, California, Girls 12 Singles, Girls 12 Doubles (Ava Naworski)

\*Ava Naworski, 13, California, Girls 12 Singles, Girls 12 Doubles (Sonya Shetty)

Adriana Perez, 13, California, Girls 12 Singles

\* Aanshi Thakur, 11, California, Girls 10 Singles, Girls 10 Doubles (Elizabeth Denler)

\* Elizabeth Denler, 11, Minnesota, Girls 10 Singles, Girls 10 Doubles (Aanshi Thakur)

Alea Guiraud, 10, California, Girls 10 Singles, Girls 10 Doubles (Aarya Shetty)

Aarya Shetty, 10, California, Girls 10 Singles, Girls 10 Doubles (Alea Guiraud)

#### BOYS ESPRIT CUP TEAM

Joseph Marshall, 13, Tennessee, \* Boys 12 Singles, Boys 12 Doubles (Advait Kartik)

Angel Galvan, 12, California, \* Boys 12 Singles, \* Boys 12 Doubles (Eshan Ali)

Eshan Ali, 12, California, Boys 12 Singles, \* Boys 12 Doubles (Angel Galvan)

Advait Kartik, 13, California, Boys 12 Singles, Boys 12 Doubles (Joseph Marshall)

\* Ashton Guiraud, 10, California, Boys 10 Singles, Boys 10 Doubles (Caleb Marshall)

\* Caleb Marshall, 9, Tennessee, Boys 10 Singles, Boys 12 Doubles (Ashton Guiraud)

\* Denotes Point Earners -- For the Esprit Cup category (12's and 10's), each country is allowed to enter up to six players for singles and two doubles teams. However, two singles players and one doubles team in each age category must be designated as point earners toward the overall Esprit Cup championship.

#### STAFF

Charlie Pratt (Oregon) – Head Coach

Jennifer Meyer (Colorado) – Esprit Coach

Jody Nance (California) – Trainer/Assistant Coach

Robbie Collins (California) -- Assistant Coach

Tony Carson (Oregon) -- Assistant Coach

Cheryl Kirk (Illinois) – Team Leader & USAR Board of Directors

#### CHEERLEADERS

The 29 U.S. Junior Team players brought along plenty of support! Besides the staff of six, 55 family members and private coaches (bringing the delegation number to 90) were right there in the stands cheering enthusiastically for the young competitors: Anwar Ali, Brian Ancheta, Gary Ball, Sue Ball, Alan Baron, Mark Baron, Mary Beth Baron, Sandra Baron, Kadambari Beelwar, Maria Canchola, Ron Denler, Dave Ellis, Pat Ellis, Debbie Farmer, Hudson Farmer, Mia Farmer, Shellie Farmer, Stephen Farmer, Walt Farmer, Angel Galvan, Michael Gleason, Alexis Guiraud,

## US JUNIOR TEAM MEDALS

### TEAM USA Overall Results -- Individual -- WORLD CUP

Girls 18 Doubles -- Nikita Chauhan/Erin Slutsky -- BRONZE

Boys 16 Singles -- Timmy Hansen -- BRONZE

Boys 16 Doubles -- Timmy Hansen/Nikhil Prasad -- SILVER

Girls 16 Singles -- Annie Roberts -- BRONZE

Boys 14 Singles -- Nikhil Prasad -- SILVER

Girls 14 Singles -- Heather Mahoney -- GOLD

Girls 14 Singles -- Ava Kaiser -- BRONZE

Girls 14 Doubles Kareena Mathew/Ava Kaiser -- BRONZE

### TEAM USA Overall Results -- Individual -- ESPRIT CUP

Boys 12 Singles -- Eshan Ali -- BRONZE

Boys 12 Singles -- Angel Galvan -- BRONZE

Boys 12 Singles Red -- Advait Kartik -- BRONZE

Boys 12 Singles Blue -- Joseph Marshall -- BRONZE

Boys 12 Doubles -- Angel Galvan/Eshan Ali -- BRONZE

Girls 12 Singles -- Sonya Shetty -- GOLD

Girls 12 Doubles -- Sonya Shetty/Ava Naworski -- BRONZE

Boys 10 Singles Blue -- Ashton Guiraud -- SILVER

Girls 10 Singles -- Elizabeth Denler -- BRONZE

Girls 10 Singles Red -- Aarya Shetty -- GOLD

Girls 10 Singles Red -- Alea Guiraud -- SILVER

Girls 10 Singles Blue -- Aanshi Thakur -- GOLD

Girls 10 Doubles -- Aanshi Thakur/Elizabeth Denler -- SILVER

Girls 10 Doubles -- Alea Guiraud/Aarya Shetty -- BRONZE

## OVERALL RESULTS -- COUNTRY STANDINGS

### World Cup -- Girls

1. Bolivia

2. Mexico

**3. USA**

4. Costa Rica

### Esprit Cup -- Girls

1. Bolivia

**2. USA**

3. Mexico

4. Costa Rica

### World Cup -- Boys

1. Bolivia

2. Mexico

**3. USA**

4. Costa Rica

### Esprit Cup -- Boys

1. Mexico

2. Bolivia

3. Costa Rica

**4. USA**

### World Cup -- Combined

1. Bolivia

2. Mexico

**3. USA**

4. Costa Rica

### Esprit Cup -- Combined

1. Bolivia

2. Mexico

**3. USA**

4. Costa Rica



U.S. Junior Team Coaches along with Parent and Private Coaches Provided Phenomenal Support!  
Photo By Cheryl Kirk

Clayton Guiraud, Julie Guiraud, Katie Hansen, Kellie Hansen, Sarah Hansen, Tim Hansen, Rick Kaiser, Sundram Kartik, Rhonda Kimler, Hadley Mahoney, John Mahoney, Melodese Mahoney, Hardy Marshall, Kristy Marshall, Prem Mathew, Matt Naworski, Armando Perez, Armando Perez, Sr., Regina Perez, Pendem Prasad, Lee Pruitt, Benjamin Roberts, Bryan Roberts, Danielle Roberts, Dave Shea, Beth Shea, Naina Shetty, Shrinivas Shetty, Steve Slutsky, Arun Kumar Sudamalla, Rakesh Thakur, Gary Wargo, and Kathleen Wargo.

### Opening Ceremonies

The basketball gym at the Indoor Club became the location for Opening Ceremonies. Players began lining up at 5:45 pm for their entrance into the Opening Ceremonies. There were 13 countries participating in total: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, and the USA.

Something extremely special took place for the US Junior Team Delegation. Ambassador Sharon Day, United States Ambassador to Costa Rica, attended Opening Ceremonies. Ambassador Day stayed for the entire ceremonies and posed afterward for photos with the U.S. players and coaches. She brought a pin for each player: Costa Rican and American flags with staffs crossed in friendship. Ambassador Day was warm and engaging. This was a proud moment for the delegation and for our sport.

### Coach Charlie Pratt's Day One Comments

"It was exciting seeing a few Esprit players making their World Championship debut in what we hope is the first of many in a long prosperous junior career. What stands out is how much these kids have grown in just a year. That goes as well for some of the kids from other countries I haven't seen since last year. They've grown so much and their games have changed so much, too; they're not the same players they were a year ago. It has become more and more apparent that the talent in junior racquetball has spread to an even level throughout most countries. The competition is much deeper. It's becoming harder and harder to predict who's going to win any given division, and this bodes well for the future of our sport."

### Gratitude and Remembrance

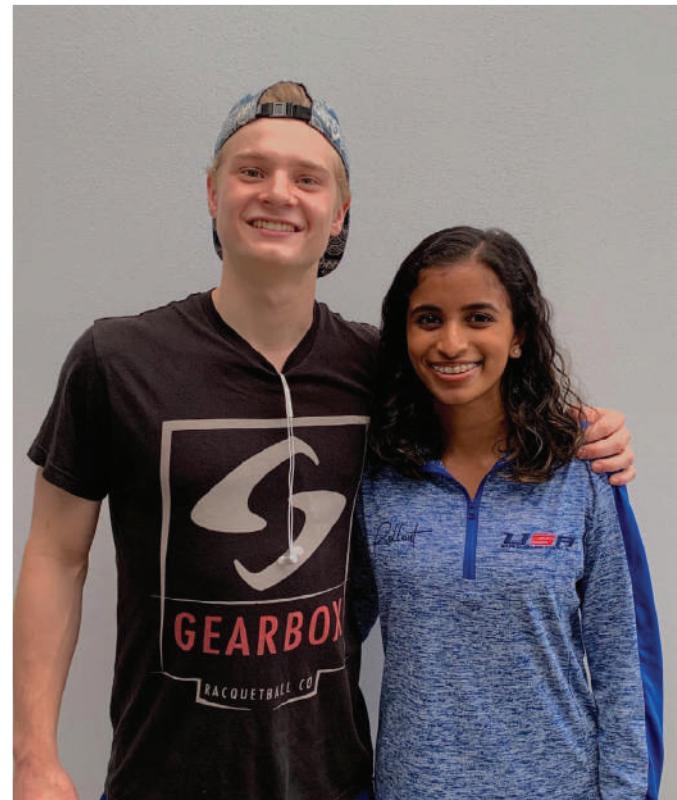
The US Junior Team thanks Wendall Pelham of Oregon for the generous support from his organization, Live Like John. This charitable organization honors the memory of Wendall's son, Spc. John A. Pelham, who passed away at age 22 in Afghanistan. November 9th would have been John's 28th birthday, and we remember him as a dedicated member of the racquetball family who posted five days before he passed, "I can't wait to play racquetball again." Coach Charlie brought Live Like John wristbands for everyone. We had John's spirit and energy behind our 29 US Junior Team players who competed for their country in Costa Rica.

### A-Team Within Team USA

The Team Behind the Team is, of course, all of us who love the sport. We identified a variation on that theme -- The Team Within the Team, aka the A-Team (remember the mid-80's TV show?). It occurred to us we had A LOT of team members whose names begin with the letter "A" -- 12 of 29. We had Aanshi, Aarya, Adriana, Advait, Alea, Alondra, Andrew, Angel, Annie, Ashton, Ava, and Ava. Note: In the military, the nickname A-Team has been used for Special Forces Operational Detachments Alpha. Interestingly, "these detachments usually consisted of twelve members." *Source: Wikipedia; The A-Team.*

### Parent/Private Coaches in the House

Besides the considerable talent contained within our US Junior Coaching Team (Charlie, Jen, Jody, Robbie, and Tony), we had the great advantage of having a number of parents involved with coaching their kids here as well as two private coaches who work extensively with some



Top: Captains Micah Farmer & Nikita Chauhan

Photo by Dylan Pruitt

Center: Girls 12 & Under Gold Medalist Sonya Shetty

Photo By Kadambari Beelwar

Above: Doubles Partners Aanshi Thakur and Elizabeth Denler

Photo By Jen Meyer

of the players throughout the year. Enhancing the coaching efforts in San José were Anwar Ali, Brian Ancheta, Dave Ellis, Tim Hansen, Rick Kaiser, Hardy Marshall, Pendem Prasad, and Gary Wargo. These valuable coaches were required to be USAR-IP certified as well as to complete background checks, SafeSport training, and CPR training. They sat side-by-side with the US Junior Team coaches at the matches with their players. This combination provides what we believe is the ultimate support that can be given to our young athletes as they go for the Gold.

#### **Andrew Gleason and Nikhil Prasad -- Teamwork Personified**

On Tuesday during Andrew Gleason's match vs. Korea, he sustained a chest muscle injury during the second game. While he continued on, the match ended with a loss in a tiebreaker. Afterwards, he attempted some treatment for the injury but wasn't able to fully compete in doubles. Therefore, he and his partner Timmy Hansen had to forfeit during the first game of doubles vs. Ecuador. Due to the injury, going into the main draw Andrew did not compete but instead in his own words became #1 Cheerleader for Team USA. Nikhil Prasad was recruited to partner with Timmy Hansen and dedicated his performance to Andrew. Timmy and Nikhil earned Silver in Boys 16 Doubles, and Nikhil put his medal around Andrew's neck at the Medals Ceremony.

#### **Anti-Doping Education at World Juniors**

The International Racquetball Federation is committed to anti-doping education and compliance with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). At the World Junior Championships, a presentation on this important topic was offered each day throughout the week (three times in Spanish and twice in English). Players were the focus of this educational initiative, but parents, family members, and coaches were also invited to attend.

#### **Feeding the Team...Much Gratitude to the Racquetball Family**

It's no secret that Head Coach Charlie Pratt is seriously dedicated to healthy eating. Food is a passion of his, and several weeks before departure for World Juniors, Charlie decided to see if the racquetball family across the country would like to help fund some meals for the players in Costa Rica. Apparently, when Charlie asks, racquetball peeps deliver; we were overwhelmed with the response.

Thanks to the generosity of the following persons and state associations, opportunities were leveraged for some creative meal planning (due to the varied playing schedules). For example, gift cards to Taco Bar, a local favorite restaurant, were purchased for use any time during the week. Any leftover funds will go directly to support the families' considerable expenses in bringing their players to World Juniors. Our gratitude goes to Wendall Pelham (Live Like John), Elizabeth Denler, Mark Baron, Stewart Solomon, Head Penn, RYDF, the Oregon High School Racquetball Association, and the following State associations: Alabama, California/Nevada, Florida, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, and New Hampshire.

For a complete look at the IRF World Junior Racquetball Championships draws, visit [www.internationalracquetball.com](http://www.internationalracquetball.com). For the Daily Blogs and additional photos from San José, visit <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/Features/2019/November/07/2019-IRF-Junior-World-Racquetball-Championship-Blogs>.

# THANK YOU

The US Junior Team Delegation wishes to deliver our gratitude to those who made this event so truly memorable:

All the individuals who made contributions large and small...every bit counts! The Team USA Challenge on [www.usaracquetball.com](http://www.usaracquetball.com) provides the opportunity for racquetball players to support the US Teams with their participation at international competitions.

Warm thanks to Ambassador Sharon Day, U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, who honored the U.S. Junior Team Delegation with her attendance at Opening Ceremonies.

The tournament staff and referees who came in from several countries to provide a quality experience for the players, including the significant gift that no player had to ref the next match!

Pablo Fajre, Gary Mazaroff, and Gustavo Farell for live streaming the action to racquetball fans near and far.

The staff of Hyatt Place who were friendly, efficient, and responsive to all requests.

The owners, management, and staff of the Indoor Club for providing a first-class facility for this World Juniors competition.

The parents and cheerleaders who were there for every match, living every point as if they were out there playing themselves.

Once again, to the associations and individuals who made contributions for team meals -- you guys are the best!

USAR Official Apparel Sponsor Rollout Racquetball (Jonathan Clay) -- thanks for making the US Junior Team look so good!

Renée Gundolff, USA Racquetball staff member, who assisted the team with multiple duties behind the scenes: US Junior Team contracts, timeline communication, insurance set-up, and parent and private coach certifications, to name a few.

Leo Vasquez who stopped whatever else he might have been doing as soon as a blog and photos were ready for posting, and USAR staff member Rachel Hyman who did a super job on social media visibility.

## Question of the Day

### “What’s your Why? Why do you play racquetball?”

**Nikita Chauhan, 18** -- I love that rush of energy when you hit a kill shot. Also, because of the people and memories that I have made through the sport.

**Graci Wargo, 18** -- Over the years it has become my getaway, my fun place. A place I can go on stressful days of college classes and work.

**Annie Roberts, 17** -- I play racquetball because I love the competitive matches that really push you to be a better player.

**Erin Slutsky, 17** -- I play racquetball because of the people I meet and my love for the game. Through racquetball I've met people from all over the US and outside that I would have never gotten to know without the opportunities USA Racquetball has given me. And with all the sports that I've played, I've never encountered one with the same level of competitiveness, the same fast pace, and the same rewarding nature.

**Alondra Canchola, 16** -- I play it because I love it, the adrenaline, the movement, the action, the anticipation! I can't get enough! The competition is awesome and a lot of bonds form over time.

**Heather Mahoney, 15** -- I play because I love the sport and the speed of the game. I like meeting people from all over the world, too.

**Ava Kaiser, 14** -- Because it is the greatest sport on the planet!

**Kareena Mathew, 14** -- Racquetball for me is something that I love to do. I always want to push myself to do better, it keeps me motivated, and I feel completely fulfilled when I am able to overcome or accomplish a goal.

**Sonya Shetty, 13** -- I play racquetball because it is such a tight sport and I love the thrill you get when you are inside the court.

**Ava Naworski, 13** -- I love working to improve.

**Adriana Perez, 13** -- To hit the ball hard, to relieve stress, for fitness and well-being.

**Elizabeth Denler, 11** -- To make friends from different states and countries.

**Alea Guiraud, 10** -- I play racquetball because it is a fast sport and you can play your own game.

**Aarya Shetty, 10** -- Because I want to stay healthy.

**Micah Farmer, 19** -- Because it's fun.

**Ben Baron, 19** -- I play racquetball because I am a very competitive person. My dad started teaching me to play when I was 12 and I have not stopped playing since.

**Dylan Pruitt, 18** -- I play racquetball because I get to meet new people and it's fun.

**Timmy Hansen, 16** -- I have fun playing, love all the friends and experiences it has given me and especially love the competition.

**Andrew Gleason, 16** -- Because I love the sport. There is always something new I can learn on the court.

**Nikhil Prasad, 14** -- I enjoy the sport and the exercise I get from it.

**Vedant Chauhan, 15** -- I play racquetball because it is fun being in a competitive environment and I like to travel to different places to play.

**Josh Shea, 15** -- I love the quickness and excitement of the sport and always want to win.

**Joseph Marshall, 13** -- Because I like to.

**Angel Galvan, 12** -- I play racquetball because the people are great and it is fun, and nice to know you have a second family.

**Eshan Ali, 12** -- It's fun and you get exercise.

**Advait Kartik, 13** -- For University.

**Nathan Rykhus, 11** -- I play racquetball because it's fun and I love it.

**Ashton Guiraud, 10** -- Because it is a fast sport and good social sport.

**Caleb Marshall, 9** -- Because I like to compete, and I want my name to be known for something good.



World Cup Team Dinner  
Photo By Jody Nance



# ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE CAN RAISE MORE THAN **\$30,000 FOR THE TEAMS!**

**S**upport the U.S. Adult and Junior National Teams with a tax-deductible contribution today. Your support is vital to the players and coaches as they prepare to represent the United States in international competition. Funds are primarily used for travel expenses, entry fees, and training.

Donations of \$100 or more, made in 2018 to the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, *will be matched* by the group of generous Team Benefactors at right, who have each pledged up to \$2,500 to support the cause. With your support, the USA Racquetball family can raise more than \$30,000 for your U.S. National Teams!

## TEAM USA CHALLENGE BENEFACTOR

*Usher Barnoff · Rick Betts · Cheryl Kirk & Kit Lawson · Michael Lippitt · Mike & Debbi Wedel*

*Under the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, donations will be used to support direct travel costs of U.S. Junior and Adult National Team Members and Coaching Staff.*

*To become a benefactor for the 2020 Team USA Challenge, please contact USA Racquetball at 719-635-5396.*

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# The Race for the 2020-2021 U.S. National Team

- Champion - 100 Points
- Runner-Up - 80 Points
- Semifinalist - 60 Points
- Quarterfinalist - 30 Points
- Round of 16 - 10 Points
- Round of 32 - 5 Points

THE UNITEDHEALTHCARE US OPEN COMPRISES 20 PERCENT OF THE TEAM QUALIFICATION PROCESS, WITH A TEAM QUALIFYING SINGLES DIVISION HELD AT NATIONAL DOUBLES CONTRIBUTING 30 PERCENT AND THE NATIONAL SINGLES TEAM QUALIFYING DIVISION COMPRISING THE REMAINING 50 PERCENT.

Final U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings  
SINGLES DIVISION

STANDING	PLAYER	US OPEN IRT DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	SINGLES DIVISION AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%	NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	TOTAL POINTS
T1	JAKE BREDENBECK	10	2					2
T1	ROCKY CARSON	10	2					2
T1	THOMAS CARTER	10	2					2
T1	DAVID HORN	10	2					2
T1	ADAM MANILLA	10	2					2
T6	JANSEN ALLEN	5	1					1
T6	JOSE DIAZ	5	1					1
T6	MAURICE MILLER	5	1					1
T6	CHARLIE PRATT	5	1					1
T6	BRADLY ROGERS	5	1					1
T6	TROY WARIGON	5	1					1

Final U.S. National Team Singles Qualification Standings  
SINGLES DIVISION

STANDING	PLAYER	US OPEN LPRT DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 20%	SINGLES DIVISIONS AT NATIONAL DOUBLES POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 30%	NATIONAL SINGLES DIVISION POINTS	WEIGHTED POINTS 50%	TOTAL POINTS
T1	MICHELLE DELAROSA	10	2					2
T1	ADRIENNE HAYNES	10	2					2
T1	RHONDA RAJSICH	10	2					2
T4	CHERYL GUDINAS	5	1					1
T4	KELANI LAWRENCE	5	1					1
T4	CASSI LEE	5	1					1
T4	SHERYL LOTTS	5	1					1
T4	HOLLIE SCOTT	5	1					1
T4	LINDA TYLER	5	1					1
T4	LEXI YORK	5	1					1

THE QUALIFICATION PROCESS FOR DOUBLES TEAMS CONTINUES TO BE BASED ON THE TEAM QUALIFYING DOUBLES DIVISION AT USAR NATIONAL DOUBLES.

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## NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Baton Rouge, LA  
March 25th - 28th

## NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

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## RECORD-BREAKING NUMBERS

### AT THE UNITEDHEALTHCARE US OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Jeff Oliver

Photos By KSphotography

Pro Singles Champion Kane Waselenchuk  
& Runner-Up Conrado Moscoso

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

Before we catch you up on all the excitement and fun from the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships, you must start making plans to attend the 25th US OPEN in 2020! The US OPEN is already the Best, Largest, and Most Prestigious Racquetball Tournament in the WORLD, but next year's 25th Anniversary Celebration will be the BEST RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENT THE SPORT HAS EVER SEEN! Mark your calendar for October 7-11, 2020, and start making those flight and hotel reservations NOW!

#### CELEBRATING 10 YEARS IN MINNESOTA

When the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships outgrew its original home in Memphis, the search was on. US OPEN Event Director Doug Ganim needed to find a city that not only had enough courts to host the sport's largest annual event but also a city that would embrace racquetball and all its players, fans, and supporters from across the globe. The 2019 edition of the US OPEN celebrated 10 years in Minnesota, and the Minneapolis & St. Paul metropolitan region has become our sport's new cozy home.

From the fabulous staff at the host Life Time venues to the hotel concierges to the downtown restaurant maître d's, Minnesotans have welcomed racquetballers from around the world since 2010. In October, the friendly feelings were no different as 732 players from 13 countries congregated in Minneapolis for a week-long racquetball celebration.

For the eighth consecutive year, Minnesota-based UnitedHealthcare served as the Title Sponsor for the US OPEN Racquetball Championships. The partnership pairs racquetball's largest and most prestigious annual tournament with one of the nation's largest health and well-being companies. UnitedHealthcare has committed their continued support as the US OPEN's Title Sponsor through the 2020 event. Sports Minneapolis, a local organization that has helped bring the Super Bowl, the Final Four, the Ryder Cup, and many more global sporting events to the Twin Cities, also committed its support to the US OPEN through 2020.

The US OPEN is also fortunate and appreciative of the following national co-sponsors who help make the event possible: Lewis Drug, My Pillow, Mueller Sports Medicine, Life Time, KWM Guterman, and TRIA Orthopaedic Centers.

## SETTING THE SCENE

The UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is hosted in the Twin Cities by Life Time and the University of Minnesota. More than one million guests visit Target Center each year, making it one of the busiest arenas in the world! The Life Time facility at Target Center serves as the hub for the US OPEN. This 160,000 square foot club sits on the lower level of the Target Center arena. Just beneath the floor where the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves and WNBA's Minnesota Lynx play, the all-Lucite portable racquetball court gifted to our sport by Susan and Leo Klimaitis is assembled into a one-of-a-kind Racquetball Stadium.

UnitedHealthcare US OPEN matches were also played at the Life Time club in Fridley, a Minneapolis suburb just 10 minutes north of Downtown. The Life Time Fridley location hosted the 2016 USA Racquetball Junior National Championships. The racquetball courts at the University of Minnesota also host US OPEN matches throughout the week, and that same University of Minnesota Recreation & Wellness Center was home to the 2018 USA Racquetball National Intercollegiate Championships.

The courts at Life Time Target Center, Life Time Fridley, and the University of Minnesota can be accessed through the US OPEN's quick and reliable (and free!) shuttle system or by local light rail. That same light rail system provides easy transportation to and from Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport to the downtown core for just \$2.00 each way. When attending the US OPEN, there is no need to spend money for a rental car!

## WATCH THE BEST IN STYLE

From the early rounds through the finals, the world's top professional players competed on the US OPEN Stadium Court after being introduced to the raucous crowd with booming music, a laser light show, and spotlights. Racquetball fans purchased bleacher tickets to individual matches or experienced top-notch VIP service by reserving a Courtside Gold Box. Gold Box holders had the best views in the house and rubbed elbows with racquetball's best players and legends. Those in a Gold Box enjoyed meals all week from Minneapolis' top restaurants including Capital Grille, City Works, Freehouse, Hen House, Ike's, Keys at the Foshay, Melting Pot, Mercury Dining Room, Mission American Kitchen, Murray's, Oceanaire, Olive Garden, Red Cow, Rock Bottom, Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, Turtle's Restaurant, and Yard House.

## KANE STILL RULES THE KING'S COURT

Kane Waselenchuk (Canada) became the youngest Men's Professional Singles US OPEN Racquetball Champion when he won his first US OPEN in 2003 at the age of 22. Fast forward 5,796 days and Kane retained the claim of also being the oldest Men's US OPEN Champion at the age of 37 with his domination of the draw in October.

The nearly 16-year span has seen Kane win 15 US OPEN Racquetball Championships including every one contested in Minneapolis. The 2019 Championship Final was Kane's 90th all-time US OPEN match victory. For his US OPEN career, Waselenchuk has only lost three matches with the last coming in 2002. Kane now holds a record 118 tournament victories on the International Racquetball Tour (IRT).

## CONRRADO PUTS RACQUETBALL WORLD ON NOTICE

If you never heard of Conrrado Moscoso (Bolivia) before the 2019 United-Healthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships, you know who this future racquetball superstar is now! The #15 seeded Moscoso started making heads turn in Minneapolis with his upset of #2 seed Rocky Carson (Ladera

Ranch, California) in the Round of 16. While it was an upset on the seed line, it was the second consecutive Grand Slam win over Rocky for Conrrado. The two met in the finals at the International Racquetball Tour's (IRT) new Grand Slam tournament in Bolivia last March. After defeating Rocky, Conrrado beat Sebastian Fernandez (Mexico) and upset #6 seed Daniel De La Rosa (Mexico) to reach the US OPEN final. In the championship match, Moscoso pushed Waselenchuk in the first game before eventually falling to the 15-time US OPEN Champion 15-12, 15-5.

## PAOLA REACHES 100

Paola Longoria (Mexico) won her 10th Women's Professional Singles US OPEN Racquetball Championship and her ninth US OPEN in a row at the 2019 edition of the sport's original Grand Slam. The victory also became Paola's 100th tournament win on Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT). Longoria's first professional tournament win came in September 2007 in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and she has since amassed 99 more Grand Slam, Tier One, and Satellite Event professional wins.

In the 2019 US OPEN Championship Final, Paola exacted revenge against Maria Jose Vargas (Argentina) who had knocked off Longoria at the previous Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT) event in Virginia. Paola's serve was nearly perfect all match long, and Vargas wasn't able to force many rallies. Despite a nagging shoulder injury, Paola continued her dominance on the Stadium Court in Minneapolis.

10X US OPEN Champion Paola Longoria



## MEXICAN YOUNGSTERS TAKE PROFESSIONAL DOUBLES CROWN

Alexandra Herrera (Mexico) and Montserrat Mejia (Mexico) needed just two games to upset the top seed and defending Women's Professional Doubles US OPEN Champions Paola Longoria (Mexico) and Samantha Salas Solis (Mexico). If you look at their ages, you would think Alexandra (25) and Montserrat (19) would be the new kids on the doubles block, however their US OPEN experience was already quite extensive before they reached the 2019 final. Herrera and Mejia played in three previous US OPEN finals

before finally breaking through for the title. Mejia also reached the semifinals in the Women's Professional Singles division before falling to Longoria.

#### **BEN & KANE EXACT REVENGE ON ALVARO & DANIEL**

Ben Croft (Atlanta, Georgia) and Waselenchuk returned to their US OPEN Doubles winning ways by overpowering the top-seeded duo of Daniel De La Rosa (Mexico) and Alvaro Beltran (Mexico). Daniel and Alvaro were the defending US OPEN Champions by way of beating Ben and Kane at the 2018 tournament. Of the six times the Professional Doubles division has been contested at the US OPEN, Ben and Kane have won four of the titles.

#### **INTERNATIONAL TAKEOVER**

For the first time in UnitedHealthcare US OPEN history, no American players reached the quarterfinals in the Men's Professional Singles or Women's Professional Singles Divisions.

In the Professional Doubles Divisions, the lone American still standing in the semifinals was eventual US OPEN Champion Ben Croft.

In the 532 men's professional racquetball top-level tour stops played since 1973, at least one American reached the quarterfinals -- until the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships. Only four IRT tournaments in history have had just one American in the quarterfinals and all those tournaments have taken place in 2019.

#### **THE AMATEURS CAME TO PLAY, TOO!**

More than 600 amateur players came to Minneapolis to play in more than 80 USA Racquetball age and skill divisions.

Winners of the top amateur divisions:

##### **Men's Open Singles:**

Mario Mercado (Colombia) def. Diego Garcia (Argentina)

##### **Women's Open Singles**

Angelica Barrios (Bolivia) def. Adriana Riveros (Colombia)

##### **Men's Open Doubles**

Suds Monchik (USA) & Jose Ubilla (Costa Rica) def. Conrrado Moscoso (Bolivia) & Roland Keller (Bolivia)

##### **Women's Open Doubles**

Graci Wargo (USA) & Shane Diaz (USA) – Round Robin Winner

##### **Mixed Open Doubles**

Natalia Mendez (Argentina) & Christian Longoria (Mexico) def. Roland Keller (Bolivia) & Jenny Daza Navia (Bolivia)

Complete results for all amateur divisions can be found at <https://www.r2sports.com/website/event-website.asp?TID=30501>.

#### **2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships By The Numbers:**

732 – Number of players competing in the 2019 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships.

13 – Countries represented at this year's US OPEN / Country - Number of Players (Argentina - 4, Bolivia - 11, Canada - 10, Chile - 5, Colombia - 18, Costa Rica - 6, Ecuador - 3, Guatemala - 11, Honduras - 2, India - 2, Japan - 10, Mexico - 33, United States - 617)

1,273 – Total number of matches played at the two Life Time venues and the University of Minnesota.

#### **RACQUETBALLERS GIVING BACK**

For the entire history of the US OPEN, players and fans have helped support children's charities by playing in the Pro-Am Doubles Event, winning items in the Silent Auction, donating their referee fees back, or through other contributions.

Thanks to everyone's support this year, the US OPEN has now raised more than HALF A MILLION DOLLARS since 1996. One hundred percent of monies raised in 2019 went directly to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Rapha House. St. Jude denies no child medical treatment based on their family's ability to pay. The mission of Rapha House is to end the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.

Richard Aal (Campbell, California) planked for more than 17 minutes on the Stadium Court on Saturday afternoon. His abs of steel helped raised thousands of additional dollars for Rapha House!



Above: Women's Pro Singles finalist Maria Jose Vargas

Top Right: Women's Pro Singles Semifinalist Samantha Salas Solis

Right: Men's Pro Singles Action - Daniel De La Rosa & Andree Parrilla

Thanks to all who made a donation, and an extra special thanks goes to Sal and Dee Perconti for organizing the US OPEN Silent Auction again this year.

#### IT TAKES A TEAM!

More than 100 staff members and volunteers make up the US OPEN team. It is because of their time, energy, and efforts that racquetball's grandest event happens each year. Many spend time year 'round preparing for the annual event. We'd like to acknowledge this year's US OPEN Committee: Andrea Hartman, Tom Kiefer, Terry Kisling, Chad Levis, Matt Miller, Jonn Olson, Vallana Perrault, Paul Ryan, Rod Southwood, Dave Tornell, Bryan Turtle, Andy Wiegand, and John Wilinski.

#### JOIN US NEXT YEAR – BIGGEST RACQUETBALL PARTY EVER!

Start making plans now to join us for the 2020 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships, back in Minneapolis, October 7-11, 2020. Come see the best players in the world and compete on racquetball's grandest stage! IT WILL BE A RACQUETBALL PARTY YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS!



## PROFESSIONAL TOUR CHAMPIONS

### IRT MEN

2019 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2018 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2017 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2016 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2015 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2014 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2013 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2012 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2011 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2010 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2009 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2008 Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2007 Rocky Carson (Calif.)  
2006 Jason Mannino (Calif.)  
2005 Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)  
2004 Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)  
2003 Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)  
2002 Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)  
2001 Cliff Swain (Mass.)  
2000 Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)  
1999 Jason Mannino (Calif.)  
1998 Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)  
1997 Cliff Swain (Mass.)  
1996 Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)

### LPRT WOMEN

Paola Longoria (Mex.)  
Rhonda Rajsich (Calif.)  
Rhonda Rajsich (Calif.)  
Paola Longoria (Mex.)  
Paola Longoria (Mex.)  
Christie Van Hees (Can.)  
Christie Van Hees (Can.)  
Cheryl Gudinas (III.)  
Rhonda Rajsich (Ariz.)  
Cheryl Gudinas (III.)  
Kerri Wachtel (Ohio)  
Christie Van Hees (Canada)  
Jackie Paraiso (Calif.)  
Jackie Paraiso (Calif.)  
Michelle Gould (Idaho)  
Michelle Gould (Idaho)

### IRT Men's Pro Doubles

2019 Ben Croft (Georgia) / Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2018 Alvaro Beltran (Mexico) / Daniel De La Rosa (Mexico)  
2017 Ben Croft (Georgia) / Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2016 José Rojas (Calif.) / Marco Rojas (Calif.)  
2015 Ben Croft (Calif.) / Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)  
2014 Ben Croft (Calif.) / Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)

### LPRT Women's Pro Doubles

2019 Alexandra Herrera (Mexico) / Montserrat Mejia (Mexico)  
2018 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Samantha Salas (Mexico)  
2017 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Gabriela Martinez (Guatemala)  
2016 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Samantha Salas (Mexico)  
2015 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Samantha Salas (Mexico)  
2014 Paola Longoria (Mexico) / Veronica Sotomayor (Ecuador)



Clockwise from top left: #GrandpaCanPlank: Congrats to Richard Aal who raised \$8k for Rapha House  
 Ben Croft in Men's Pro Doubles Quarterfinal Action  
 Color Guard Ceremony  
 Pro Am Doubles Champions Rosco Halsey & Rodrigo Montoya  
 Women's Pro Doubles Team of María Renée Rodríguez and Gaby Martínez  
 Alexandra Herrera and Montserrat Mejía celebrating their Women's Pro Doubles victory



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**732**  
Players

**1,273**  
MATCHES PLAYED

**87**  
DIVISIONS

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US - 83%  
International - 17%



KANE WASELENCHUK  
2019 US OPEN TITLE



PAOLA LONGORIA  
2019 US OPEN TITLE



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Heather Olson  
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Derek Woodard  
Adam Wyatt  
Stacey Young



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## ADRENALINE = READY FOR BATTLE!

By Toni Bevelock Delos Santos



**Y**ou're warming up on the glass court to play in the finals at National Doubles! Your heart is racing, your mouth is dry, your hands are shaking and of course those butterflies are in your stomach! What does that mean? Why are you so nervous? This is not good, right?? Now the dialogue starts in your head.... *I hope I play well.... did I practice enough...? I need to calm down!!* Well, seems like great advice to yourself because we all know that being nervous is bad, right?? Actually, it is just the opposite!

Let's look at the science behind why all these crazy feelings are uncontrollably happening in our bodies. As humans we have a built-in survival mechanism known as Acute Stress Response. It is also known as "fight or flight" that automatically prepares our bodies to handle perceived danger. When we are in a high-stress situation, our bodies get *ready* to perform under pressure. The key word here is **READY!**

- *Butterflies – not digesting food so we have excess stomach acid.*
- *Shaking – motor neurons are going out to your extremities faster, so you have faster reaction time.*
- *Dry Mouth – shutting down saliva because you are not going to eat.*

Studies have shown that when people perceive the nervous reactions as a bad thing and try to suppress those feelings, their performance suffers. On the other hand, people who reappraise nerves as being a sign that they are excited and ready for battle perform significantly better. We need to embrace the feeling, take our deep breath, and channel all of that awesome energy into playing our best!

***Anything that gets your blood racing is probably worth doing. -- Hunter S. Thompson***

*About Toni: Toni Bevelock Delos Santos, former National Racquetball Champion, has an extensive background in sports and fitness. Toni has a unique gift of relating to athletes of all ages and skill levels. She partners with teams, coaches, and facilities across the nation, including Athletic Republic, Matchpoint Tennis Academy, Tony Zuniga Baseball, Winterton Racquetball, Elite Pitching Performance, Tustin Western Little League, and Orange County Nutrition Coaching. Toni is available for coaching thru FaceTime or in-office appointments. For more information on 90% Mental: <http://www.tonidelossantos.com/services/> or contact Toni at [tonimentalgame@gmail.com](mailto:tonimentalgame@gmail.com).*



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## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE LOSING?

By Dave Ellis

**Y**ou are down and you feel the match slipping away. It's time to press the mental pause button. Think rather than panic. Call a time out if you have one and calmly consider the adjustments that you might make. If you don't have a time out, use your ten seconds while serving and receiving serve. The question, "Why am I losing and what can I do about it," is of the utmost importance. Here are some answers:

- Change your serves. Change positions in the service box. Change the type of serves. Should I stop driving and start using lobs or slop/garbage serves? Mix your serves. There are many ways to make changes. Think about a baseball pitcher that always throws the same pitch. The batters adapt. Now think about the pitcher that can execute many different pitches with the same motion. He is much harder to hit. Positioning is important. A drive to the left corner from the left of the service box is quite different than one from the far right.
- Are you losing because of your return of serve? If there is a particular serve that is being used against you, think of the different return options that you have. Which ones can you execute well? Which ones put your opponent in the back of the court on the defensive? Should you set up slightly to the left or to the right? Dig in mentally, and don't lose hope.
- Think about the tempo. Many times, losing increases the anxiety level, and this leads to playing too fast. Take your time serving. You have 10 seconds, but often the referee is not counting. When you are receiving serve, raise your racquet, think, breathe, and relax. You may also want to vary the time you take between serves. Sometimes, you can serve very quickly, other times you can use most all of your 10 seconds. This can be frustrating to an opponent as he/she must remain tense and ready while you are relaxing in the service box.
- Think about your positioning during the rallies. Are you too far forward or too far back? With what type of shots is your opponent winning rallies? If you find yourself getting passed, move back a step. If your opponent is pinching effectively, move forward a step. Are you giving too much room for your opponent's down the line shots? Hang in there, and make him/her hit a perfect shot to pass you.
- Consider your shot selection choices. Are you often taking a lot of low percentage risky shots, such as that high backhand splat off the side wall from 38 feet? Think of your opponent's positioning and how you might attack this. For example, if you hit a good down the line shot that your opponent rekills, it probably means that he/she is "camping" on the line. This is an important idea: When you hit a quality shot and your opponent covers it easily, it indicates that he/she is committing early to a particular shot. Set up to hit that shot, and then hit a different one. Also, a very common mistake is to hit shot after shot cross court. Use that footwork, get square to the side wall, so that you can hit the ball down the line or kill the ball in the near corner, while still keeping the cross court option.
- Check your anxiety level. Being anxious, being afraid of losing can interrupt your timing. Losing your timing often results in hitting the ball too early and thus too high. Interestingly enough, my son, John, often played really well when he was exhausted because it slowed him down.
- Consider the shot selection strategy that you are using. If you are losing, you probably should change this. Should you hit more pinches, more passes, more down the line shots, more near corner kills, more wide angles, etc.? Make the two most basic rules work for you: 1) Hit the ball into the back corners while you assume good defensive position; and 2) Use the side wall for pinches and splats only when the opponent is behind you.
- Over-anticipation can sometimes lead to your opponent winning the rally easily. Generally speaking, when your opponent has a setup, relax, stay stable, and be ready to move. Focus on the opponent's positioning. Against a player that over-anticipates, a smart opponent will set up to kill or pinch, and then hit an easy passing shot.
- Never give up, no matter what. It doesn't matter by how much you're losing or how tired and frustrated you are, stay calm, believe you can win, and keep thinking. Remember that if you have the serve, your opponent must win two consecutive rallies to earn a point. This is a key thought to keep in mind while you're working to make that comeback that you'll probably never forget.

*About Dave: Dave Ellis was Team Leader/Assistant Coach for two years under Coach Winterton. He was appointed Head Coach serving two intervals, 2004 - 2008 and 2012 - 2019. In 2004, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2016, Team USA won the prestigious Overall World Championships under his leadership. Working with the Reaching Your Dream Foundation (RYDF), Dave now dedicates himself to promoting junior racquetball in Northern California.*



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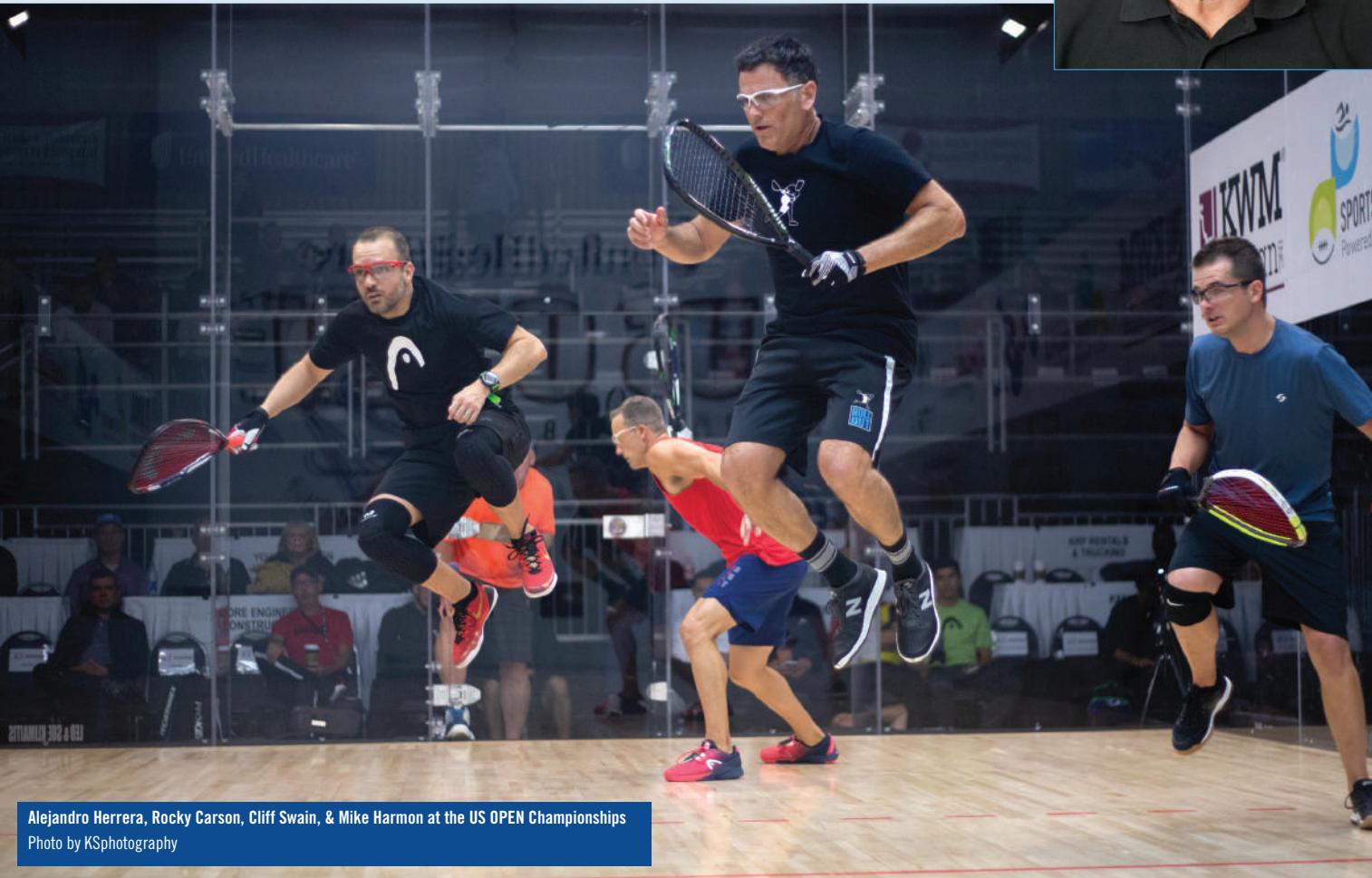


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## "... IS THE OPPONENT'S RACQUET CONSIDERED PART OF THE BODY?"

By Otto Dietrich, USA Racquetball National Rules Commissioner



Alejandro Herrera, Rocky Carson, Cliff Swain, & Mike Harmon at the US OPEN Championships  
Photo by KSphotography

**H**ere are seven things that make matches and, eventually, whole tournaments take a lot longer to complete than they should.

1. Players not reporting until their scheduled match times or even later. There's no rule that requires players to be "early," but we generally like to see matches start just a bit early, if possible. Tournament directors should routinely enforce the 10-minute forfeit rule if there is no valid reason for a player being late.

2. Players reporting to play who are not dressed yet or else not ready go directly to the court, warm up, and play. That's what "checking in" means – I'm ready! Pre-match warm-up activities can and should

be accomplished off-court and before the scheduled match time.

3. Referees allowing players/teams to take longer on-court warm-ups than the rules call for: 5 concurrent minutes for singles players and 5 minutes (each) for doubles teams.

4. Referees not calling the score or "second serve" in a timely manner to start that "10-second clock." The rulebook says the score or "second serve" should be called shortly after the rally ends as the players prepare to return to their respective positions (not *after* they arrive at their positions or else "seem ready to play"). Be understanding of any extra time needed for things like drying the

ball or tying one's shoes, but you should expect a timely beginning of most rallies.

5. Referees allowing competitors to take extended timeouts or more timeouts than permitted (only 30 seconds per timeout and three timeouts per game), with only two timeouts allowed in the tiebreaker. Note: scorecards have a place where one can keep track of the number of timeouts taken.

6. Referees allowing competitors to take "extended time" between games which should be limited to only 2 minutes between the first and second games and 5 minutes between the second game and the tiebreaker.

### DO YOU HAVE A RULES/REFEREEING QUESTION?

Be sure to email it to me at [ODietrich@usaracquetball.com](mailto:ODietrich@usaracquetball.com) and you might find it featured in an upcoming issue of *Racquetball Magazine*. I will personally answer every question I get, no matter how simple or complex it may be!

### Always Play by the Rules

... I encourage you to go online where you can find, review, and/or download them at:  
[teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules](http://teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules).

7. And finally, referees not returning the finished scorecard back to the tournament desk in a timely manner so that another match can be assigned to that now-inactive court.

While each of these occurrences may be a relatively insignificant delay, the cumulative effect of these things happening with every match played can add up to lots of delay and time lost, even for small tournaments. So, why not review these seven issues again and honestly assess whether you may have been “guilty” as either a player, or referee, or both. Then, at your next tournament, do your best to help keep the tournament on time! Here is a recently asked question about hinders...

**Chad V. asked:** The rules say that if a return hits an opponent, it is a hinder and the point is replayed. For the purpose of that rule, is the opponent's racquet considered part of the body? If the return hits the opponent's racquet before hitting the front wall, would that point be replayed, or would the returner win the point?

**So, I told Chad:** The rules do not say that anywhere. A hinder is an interference with a normal action. All hinders fall into one of two major categories: replay and penalty. There are different consequences for each category. Replay hindlers are basically of the “no fault” variety, and penalty hindlers involve some sort of culpability, generally resulting in the loss of that rally for the offender. In most cases, it is the person on offense (who's trying to return the ball) who wins a penalty hinder rally. Everything a player takes onto the court is considered “part of him” and is treated just like it was his arm or leg. The answer to this question would depend on facts not currently available: Where on the court was the player who hit that ball standing at the time he hit the ball? Where was the ball? Where was the person whose racquet was hit by the ball standing on the court and what was he doing when his racquet was hit? Was the racquet being extended in an unnatural manner as if to try to get it hit or stop that rally? Did the shot that was “stopped” have the proper speed and direction needed for it to have reached the front wall had it not been stopped? All and each of those

factors would indicate which of the two categories of hindlers would apply here. It was a hinder of some sort because the rally ended before it should have, but what category of hinder it was remains unknown.

**Chad responded with:** I was looking at what appears to be an abbreviated version of the rules at a college website. You are right that I also need to look at section 3.15. My opponent served the ball from the right center portion of the court. I was standing directly behind the server at the time I returned the shot with a straight shot to the front wall. The ball was hit at waist level and clearly would have hit the front wall had it not hit his racquet. After looking at Rule 3.15, I now think that this is most likely a penalty hinder for failure to move.

**I closed my exchange with Chad by saying:** It sounds like you do have it right now. He served poorly, and that set him up for that penalty hinder situation. The server has full control over where and how hard and high he serves and where it might be playable by the receiver. That's his duty! So, it was really his error and he should have had to pay for it. When such a situation arises, you should just hold up your shot because if he is right there, you do not have to hit him to win such a rally. Also, don't let him “be in the way” so as to influence you to just hit around him. Instead, hold up and tell him that you win that rally outright according to Rule 3.15.

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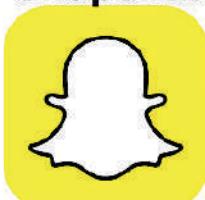
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# CONTINUING THE Making of a Champion



■ **By Fran Davis** (The Coach) • **Diana McNab** (Sports Psychologist) • **Dan Obremski** (Fitness Expert)

**L**et's continue "Making You a Champion" using the core principles of "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" as you build your championship racquetball game one assessment at a time.

In this issue, I am going to discuss "**Proper Basic Footwork.**"

Basic footwork is probably the most critical part of hitting a ball during a rally, on the serve, and relocating out of the service zone after the serve, on the return of serve, or anytime for that matter! Your goal is to always try and be square to the sidewall when hitting a ball, if there is time, to maximize on power, gain consistency, and obtain accuracy. (Sometimes you will find yourself not having time to square up to the sidewall at the dotted line because the action is so fast, but you still want to be able to engage your hips).

By squaring up to the sidewall, you have a better chance of using your legs and hips, which is the source of power. This power is then transferred through your upper body via your torso to your shoulder, to your arm, to your wrist, to the racquet, and ultimately to the ball.

Let's take a look at the "proper basic footwork."

A key reason I always stress "proper basic footwork" is that the ball is usually traveling in excess of over 100 mph in only a 20x20x40 box, which gives you less time to react to the ball.

A) During a rally and on the return of serve, when you are down and ready, you are square to the front wall. In order to get square to the side wall, you should do the following:

1) Down and ready (facing the front wall)

2) Legs should be wider than shoulder-width apart with knees slightly bent.

3) Use the crossover step:

a) Pivot on the foot the side of the court the ball is on, which opens the hips.

b) Push off with the opposite foot, crossover, so you are now square to the sidewall.

4) From this position, you can move to the ball, and when you get there, you are ready to step into the ball and hit the ball properly.

B) During a serve, you are already square to the sidewall so all you have to do is step into your serve (toward the front wall). You accomplish this by using a one-step or a two-step motion depending upon your level of play or what serve you are going to hit:



Rocky Carson

Photo By KSphotography

1) Low hard serve – one or two-step motion

2) Soft high serve – one-step motion

C) After you serve, you want to relocate out of the service box to get back into a good center court position to be ready for the return. You do it with a pivot (so now your left or right shoulder is pointing to the respective back corner, based on if you are a lefty or righty), then a crossover step, then shuffle back to the middle. DO NOT backpedal, which means you come out with the front of your body facing the front wall and your back facing to the back wall.

Remember, “proper basic footwork” will help lead to the following:

1) More power, which gives your opponent less time to react.

2) More accuracy, which allows you to put the ball as far away from your opponent as possible to force him to hit on the run, creating more mistakes.

3) More consistency, which will give your opponent less setups.

The end result is you will be a better racquetball player...and who doesn't want that?

Here's how my Championship Team utilizes these techniques:

Rocky Carson and Paola Longoria continuously work with their trainers. Every time they step onto the court, their #1 goal is to have “proper basic footwork” utilizing good crossover steps and shuffling to get into position to strike the ball. They understand this is an integral part of their technique that creates power, accuracy, and consistency, which they know is extremely important to keep the pressure on their opponents.

**Proper Basic Footwork** is yet another required skill on the road to championship racquetball. All of the players I coach, from the professionals led by Rocky and Paola to the amateurs, know just how important it is to have “Proper Basic Footwork.” It's not easy to do, but it's a “must.” Their records speak for themselves: Rocky and Paola are two of the most decorated athletes in racquetball. Rocky finished the 2018-2019 season ranked #2 on the IRT. Paola finished 2018-2019 ranked #1 on the LPRT (an undefeated season) for the 10th time and also was crowned the 2019 US OPEN Champion for the 10th time.

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# SPC John A. Pelham Memorial Tournament of Champions

## Multnomah Athletic Club, Portland, Oregon

### December 5-8, 2019

By Kelly R. Diesel  
Photos By KSphotography



Portland, Oregon, has always had a tremendous passion for the sport of racquetball and the community that supports it. With a full draw and a full house, the IRT and all its stars put on quite a show at the 2019 SPC John A. Pelham Memorial Tournament of Champions! The IRT hosted this fifth Tier 1 (T1) tournament of the 2019-2020 season at the Multnomah Athletic Club in early December.

#### Quarterfinals

We began with a matchup between a young world champion, #10 Rodrigo Montoya, from Chihuahua, Mexico, and the "greatest to ever hit the court," #1 Kane Waselenchuk, who resides in Austin, Texas. Waselenchuk found himself on a roll with a 7-2 lead. Montoya didn't shy away as he battled back to 7-6 with some well-placed serves and some near impossible gets, but he couldn't close out Game #1, 9-15. With a 7-4 lead in Game #2, Waselenchuk tried punishing a plum left up from Montoya, who made an absolute pearl of a play with hands as soft as tissue paper to drop it off the front wall and earn himself his fifth point. That highlight was about all that came to pass in Game #2 as Waselenchuk went on to take control and advance, 15-11.

Over on another court, Andree Parrilla (#4), of San Luis Potosí, Mexico, faced off against #17 Thomas Carter (Wheaton, Illinois) for the first time in their professional careers. With both players following each other at 4-4, Parrilla found another level to his game and never looked back. In a period of about six minutes, with some help from a couple of careless errors from Carter, Parrilla put together an 11-0 run to take Game #1, 15-4. In Game #2, Carter kept his composure and made some excellent serves early to give

himself a great start and an early lead, 6-0. At 10-5, it looked like Carter was determined to force a Game #3, but Parrilla wisely used a timeout to slow down the momentum and went from 6-11 to 15-11 and into the semifinals.

In another quarterfinal matchup, #6 Daniel De La Rosa from San Luis Potosí, Mexico, faced #2 Alex Landa, of Juarez, Mexico. With Landa serving at 2-6, something forced De La Rosa to take an injury timeout as he came up grabbing his right knee. Landa smelled blood in the water; found himself on a 10-point unanswered run just a couple of rallies later; and took Game #1, 15-10. In Game #2, Landa took an early 11-4 lead until the tables began to turn and De La Rosa began his own run. Scoring six points in about two minutes, he closed the gap to 11-10 and forced Landa to take a timeout. Landa returned to move De La Rosa around the court and found his way to the semifinals with a 15-12 victory.

The last quarterfinal was cut short, unfortunately, due to an injury sustained in the

first game by #2 Rocky Carson of Ladera Ranch, California, who was competing against #11 Jake Bredenbeck of Marine, Minnesota. Game #1, match, and a spot in the semifinals went to Bredenbeck, 15-6, WBF-Injury.

#### Semifinals

Alex Landa faced Jake Bredenbeck in the first semifinal of the day. After about three minutes of play, Bredenbeck scored his first point with a hard and low drive to the front court that died before Landa got his racquet to it, 1-1. Bunches of skips from Bredenbeck going at that bottom board on the front wall led to Landa getting out ahead in Game #1, 8-1. A dime that pinched the bottom board broke Landa's streak, and Bredenbeck followed it up with a smooth, soft cross-court pass at 8-3. Landa gave up two more points but found his groove coming off Bredenbeck's return of serves. Skips were too much for Bredenbeck to recover from, and Landa took Game #1, 15-5.



Bredenbeck got a break between games but couldn't get one on the court as Landa opened up Game #2 with a 5-0 run in a five-minute stretch. Bredenbeck found his way to the box and got his first point with another smooth kill shot into the right corner. Bredenbeck scorched two more points with bottom board bombs that he couldn't realize in Game #1. Landa got back to his cross-court pearls for a couple of points to force an early Game #2 timeout from Bredenbeck at 8-3. Both players exchanged points coming back from the timeout, 9-4, and Bredenbeck exhibited some smart decisions in not forcing as many kill shots from the back court, but in the end Landa demonstrated the difference in rankings, 15-7. Landa has now missed only one semifinal appearance in five IRT tournaments.

The King, #1 Kane Waselenchuk, went toe-to-toe with #4 Andree Parrilla in the semifinal that many fans have seen before, one that always produces excellent highlights. Parrilla always seems to find his way into a match against the greatest of all time, facing Waselenchuk 11 times before this semifinal match. Waselenchuk hasn't lost a game to Parrilla in their careers, and Parrilla hasn't faced anyone else on Tour as often as Waselenchuk, so the stage was set for Parrilla.

Waselenchuk jumped out early and started out just as hot as ever with a five-point lead, 5-0. Parrilla put an end to the scoring run with a bullet down the line followed by a backhand kill shot and a pinch into the front right corner, 5-2. Six more points from Parrilla, including a cross-court pass and a bottom board bomb that Waselenchuk had no chance of getting, gave him an 8-5 lead. Waselenchuk didn't waste any time getting this game a little closer in his favor, and after some back-and-forth rallies and point exchanges, the King knotted it up at 9-9. A few more points from Waselenchuk forced a timeout from Parrilla, but the King knew he had the momentum and left the young gun from San Luis Potosí in the dust, 15-9.

Parrilla struggled to find his rhythm in Game #2 as Waselenchuk started the match with another big scoring run, 5-0. Parrilla battled back, similar to Game #1, but he could never close the gap. At 7-4, Waselenchuk got back into the service box and ran away with the match, scoring eight straight unanswered points and sending himself into the finals against Landa.

## Finals

In a rematch of the 2019 Arizona Pro/Am T1 IRT tournament earlier this year, #2 Landa took on #1 Waselenchuk. Similar to Parrilla, Landa has matched up against Waselenchuk more than any other IRT athlete, but unlike Parrilla, Landa does have one victory over the King. Players exchanged several serving opportunities to begin Game #1, 1-1. Waselenchuk broke the standoff with two points, but Landa was quick to tie it back up at 3-3. A questionable bullet in the front court that was called "good" gave Landa his first lead of the match as he snagged another point to make it 5-3. That questionable call seemed to fire up Waselenchuk—he got into the service box and punished Landa's returns. With an 8-5 lead, coming back from Landa's timeout, After a timeout, Landa returned with some tremendous gets off Waselenchuk's cross-court passes but was only able to find two more points in Game #1. He couldn't find a way to catch the King, and Game #1 finished with a score of 7-15.



Landa started off Game #2 off with a bullet down the line that had Waselenchuk diving out of his shoes to get, with no luck. A two-point lead looked like a new Landa in Game #2, but Waselenchuk was quick to tie it up, 2-2. Soft hands in one rally and bullets in the corners in the next gave Waselenchuk a 5-2 lead, but Landa scored some of his own, 5-5. An exchange of great serves and tough drawn-out rallies gave Landa some momentum and forced a timeout from Waselenchuk. Unfortunately for Landa, the King returned from his timeout determined to leave Portland with the championship. A seven-point run sent Waselenchuk past Landa for his third Tier 1 victory of the 2019-2020 season.

The Tour will pick up T1 action in the New Year beginning with the Longhorn Open, January 17-19, in Austin, Texas. Be sure to check out the IRT's website and social media platforms for updates!

Left: Jake Bredenbeck in Quarterfinal Action

Above Right: Kane Waselenchuk & Alex Landa

# New Season, New Goals

By T.J. Baumbaugh, LPRT Commissioner

Photos Courtesy of LPRT



The 2019-2020 LPRT season started at the end of August in the hometown of #1 player Paola Longoria. San Luis Potosí, Mexico, has kicked off our season for six consecutive years now, with Longoria winning all six of these Grand Slams. Fans come out each year, filling the stands and VIP section, to watch their favorite and most famous racquetball player compete. Junior players crowd around Longoria to get a glimpse, a high five, a look, a smile, anything -- they are just so excited to see her! Media, cameras, paparazzi, and the like follow along, too.

"Cancha Paola Longoria," Paola's full glass court, was set up outside at Club Deportivo Potosino. Longoria made it to and through the final without dropping a game. In the final, she faced Maria Jose Vargas (Argentina), who upset Samantha Salas (Mexico) in an 11-9 tiebreaker in the semis. In doubles action, the young Mexican team of Montserrat Mejia and Alexandra Herrera upset the #1 seeded team, Longoria and Salas. Thank you to Paola Longoria and her family for making this event possible.

Stop #2 for this season, "LPRT By the Beach," took us to a new location. This time it was Virginia Beach and the hometown of Tour player Kelani Lawrence and Kelani's mother and the event's tournament director, Hall of Famer Malia Bailey. The hospitality was generous, and the people were exceptionally warm and welcoming. They even managed to push a hurricane out to sea so we could start our pro matches by 5 pm Friday.

The most notable match of this event was the pro singles final. Maria Jose Vargas (#3 at the time of this event) upset #1 Longoria in an exciting hard-fought match, 7-15, 15-12, 11-4. Vargas played incredibly tough and focused, maybe some of her best racquetball to date. She also defeated Salas in the semis in two straight games. Vargas and partner Natalia Mendez (Argentina) made a trip to the doubles final, falling short to Longoria and Salas.

focused, maybe some of her best racquetball to date. She also defeated Salas in the semis in two straight games. Vargas and partner Natalia Mendez (Argentina) made a trip to the doubles final, falling short to Longoria and Salas.

Thank you, Malia, for bringing the LPRT to Virginia Beach, and thank you to the many wonderful people and sponsors who came out to support the pro players, some of them playing pro-am doubles and many of whom took part in a very special opening ceremony. Special thanks to Bill Milbach for all his hard work and to photographer Maria Silva Vargas for keeping a picture diary of the event.

After Virginia Beach, then Vegas (3Wall-Ball) for some, the LPRT headed to the 2019 US OPEN. This was a monumental event for #1 player Longoria. Not only did she earn her 10th US OPEN title, the win marked her 100th professional career title, an amazing accomplishment for any sport. To note, Longoria is only 30 years old and has plenty of years, and wins, ahead of her.

Longoria defeated Vargas in the singles final. This was Vargas' second trip to a US OPEN final. In doubles action, the young Mexican duo of Mejia and Herrera pulled off another successful upset over Longoria and Salas for what may well have been the most exciting match of the event.



Top: Paola Longoria signing autographs for her fans at the Paola Longoria Experience  
Above: Sponsor Doubles at the LPRT by the Beach Event



At the 28th Annual Turkey Shoot Open, Paola Longoria added another title to her belt, facing off against a new finalist in Chicago. As the #10 seed, Montserrat Mejia defeated the #2, #6, and #7 ranked tour players to reach her first-ever pro final. Mejia's wins, along with upsets by Erin Rivera and Jessica Parrilla, proved once again that Mexico is a major force in professional racquetball. By the end of the event, the Turkey Shoot was known as the Tournament of Upsets.

Longoria and partner Samantha Salas were the victorious doubles team battling through an 11-7 match tiebreaker. They bested the reigning US OPEN Championship doubles team of Mejia and partner Alexandra Herrera who dominated in Game #1 but fell short in the tiebreaker.

Thank you to all the many volunteers and sponsors who made the event possible again this year with special thanks to presenting sponsor Platt Hill of Platt Hill Nursery and to Glass Court's Dan Jaskier along with Tournament Directors Geoff Peters and Doug Halverson.

The 28th Annual Christmas Classic, as always, was an excellent way to close out the calendar year and kick off the holiday season. We thank those who made the event possible, including Karen and Mike Grisz, Andy Gomer of The Gomer Group, Wayne Toyne, and all of the volunteers who helped the event run smoothly. A sincere shout-out to the fans in Maryland, too.

The draws pointed to the final with #1 and #2 facing off in both singles and doubles. Maryland saw two exciting finals with twists, turns, and tiebreakers. Longoria won the singles and doubles with partner Samantha Salas. Vargas was a finalist in singles and doubles with partner Natalia Mendez.

Vargas has secured her spot at #2 heading into 2020. Look for her to make a majority of finals in the second half of the season. Mejia could be a threat for the Top 3, but school and regular appearances at tour events will be the deciding factor. Salas, after a dip in performance at the end of 2019, should bounce back strong. Herrera should remain a consistent and steady Top 4 player with continuing potential for growth. For Longoria, well, she doesn't appear to be any slowing down anytime soon and is likely to dominate again in the second half of this LPRT season.



Top: Sponsor Doubles at the 28th Annual Turkey Shoot Open

Above Left: LPRT Staff T.J. Baumbaugh, Jerry Josey, and Tim Baghurst during the 28th Annual Christmas Classic

Above Right: Current #1 Paola Longoria and Former #1 Lynn Adams at the 28th Annual Turkey Shoot Open

# A Decade of 3WallBall in Las Vegas

By Peggie Tellez  
Photos by Stephen Fitzsimons



Sostre and Chris McDonald for the Men's Pro Doubles crown, thus stopping perennial winner Sostre from winning yet another Cup. In the battle for the Women's Pro Cup on center court. Michelle De La Rosa and Carla Muñoz prevailed by defeating Rhonda Rajsich and Michelle Herbert in the final. The grand finale of the tournament saw Daniel De La Rosa face off against Rick "Soda Man" Koll for the Men's Pro Cup title. In the Mixed Pro Doubles division. Daniel teamed with wife Michelle, and "Soda Man" was partnered with Rhonda Rajsich, who was playing her third final of the day. Daniel held up his end, and Michelle wasn't the only one in the family to take home a Pro Cup this year!

Though not part of the Cup race, the finale of the surprisingly well-populated Combined 75+ division ended with Daniel De La Rosa and Mike Peters defeating Brandon Davis and Geoff Osberg.

On the amateur side, Jack McDonald entered the tournament leading the Men's Amateur Cup contestants. His fine performance (winning the Men's Open Doubles and making the finals in the Mixed Open Doubles) secured the Men's Amateur Cup for him. The "come from behind" story of the tournament belongs to Danielle Jones who wasn't even in the top ten at the start of the tournament. Her fine performances in Singles, Doubles, and Mixed garnered enough points to squeeze in front of Susie Boulanger, Victoria Rodriguez, and Martha McDonald who finished in second, third, and fourth places, respectively. The Hemborg/Bella Vista Pro Cup Champions, Daniel & Michelle De La Rosa, were crowned along with the Amateurs Cup Champions, Jack McDonald and Danielle Jones.

The 2019 CPRT Finals kicked off on Saturday night under the lights with Koll and Beltran topping Sostre and Gabriel Medina. Following the match was the Nellis Air Force Base Color Guard's salute to our Heroes and Adaptive racquetball players. Mike Peters delivered the shortest speech of his life during his recognition as one of WOR's 2019 Hall of Fame entrants. Well-deserved appreciation was heaped on another newly minted Hall of Famer, 3WB Event Producer Mike Coulter.

Strong sport, family ties, the Vegas vibe, and outdoor racquetball at its finest -- all of these keep this event at the top of everyone's must-be-there list in 2020. Stay tuned for the dates and details!

The 10th Anniversary of the Las Vegas 3WallBall World Championships has come to a close, but not without some very memorable moments for these talented outdoor sports players. With over \$25,000 in prize money up for grabs and healthy draws in several divisions, this was arguably one of the biggest events of the year in racquetball.

The 2019 edition of 3WB brought nearly 900 players and fans to The STRAT for excellent competition. Added fun with the return of Ladies Night and the Player Party made for good times and great memories. Sustaining an event of this size and caliber is no easy feat, and to have its return for 10 years running is a testament to the dedication of all involved. From the folks who construct the courts, to the staff that ran the desk operations so smoothly, and to each and every volunteer who pitched in, we couldn't be more grateful for your support and teamwork.

The 3WallBall Hemborg/Bella Vista Cup Series concluded at the 10th Anniversary Edition of the 3WallBall World Championships in Las Vegas. Every previous Cup has been decided at the final tournament of the Series, and this year followed the same pattern.

On Sunday morning, the final day of the tournament, Daniel De La Rosa teamed with Alvaro Beltran to defeat Robert Sostre and Chris McDonald for the Men's Pro Doubles crown, thus stopping perennial winner Sostre from winning yet another Cup. In the battle for the Women's Pro Cup on center court. Michelle De La Rosa and Carla Muñoz prevailed by defeating Rhonda Rajsich and Michelle Herbert in the final. The grand finale of the tournament saw Daniel De La Rosa face off against Rick "Soda Man" Koll for the Men's Pro Cup title. In the Mixed Pro Doubles division. Daniel teamed with wife Michelle, and "Soda Man" was partnered with Rhonda Rajsich, who was playing her third final of the day. Daniel held up his end, and Michelle wasn't the only one in the family to take home a Pro Cup this year!





Far Left: Michelle Herbert  
Bottom Left: Rocky Carson in Pro Doubles Action  
Left: Recent Hall of Fame Inductee Mike Peters  
Below: Michelle & Daniel De La Rosa



# Save The Date

2020 Beach Bash, presented by Splathead  
3/19/2020 - 3/22/2020



We Are Almost Sold Out!



## VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBER ACTIVITIES

The MRF has been extremely busy the second half of 2019 hosting clinics and events for our veterans and service members. The 2019 MRF Military National Championships held at Fort Hood, Killeen, Texas, August 9-11 and hosted by JoAnna Reyes, MRF Texas Liaison, is now in the books! What a great event it was for our military, retired, active, veterans, and also a wheelchair division. Players were treated to round robin play; souvenir shirts, goody bags, door prizes, awards; and a Saturday BBQ banquet. Special guests included MRF Executive Director Steven Harper, Live Like John's Wendall Pelham, and a meet and greet with Kane Waselenchuk. Kane has issued a special challenge for next year's event...more to follow on that!

Next up was the 3 WallBall World Championships held in Las Vegas. The MRF started off the event with our ProAm Doubles. Contributing amateurs Vic Mandella, Maddie Melendez, Amy Brewer, Howard Chennault, Ellis Murphy, and Ken Shockley (RRC clinic participant/graduate) paired up with pros Rhonda Rajsich, Carla Muñoz, Michelle De La Rosa, Daniel De La Rosa, and MRF Executive Director Steven Harper. A fun time was had by all, and when the final match was complete, Daniel and Amy were victorious. Funds donated will allow the MRF to continue introducing racquetball to our veterans as an adaptive sport.

Also in Las Vegas, the MRF hosted an Adaptive Doubles Division for veterans who have completed one of our many Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinics (RRCs). Eight veterans were paired with volunteer outdoor players and competed in two separate divisions: wheelchair and adaptive. The wheelchair division winner was Cedric Delong (NV) with WOR partner Korosh Shetabi (TX), and the adaptive division winner was Ken Shockley (NV) with WOR partner Ellis Murphy. The competition was fierce but there were smiles all around. The participating veterans and volunteers could not have been more grateful for the opportunity to compete. A special thanks goes out to Event Director Mike Coulter for allowing the MRF to be a part of this great event.

UnitedHealthcare US OPEN players and spectators were treated to a wheelchair racquetball demonstration Friday and Saturday on the show court. MRF wheelchair player Joe Hoffman took on Rhonda Rajsich and Steven Harper, showcasing wheelchair racquetball for not only the MRF but all wheelchair players. Thanks to Doug Ganim for supporting the MRF and wheelchair racquetball.

In between all of these events we have been busy hosting clinics in Las Vegas, Phoenix, Prescott, Montgomery, Florida area, and San Diego.

For more information regarding the MRF, visit <http://www.militaryracquetball.com> or contact Steven Harper at [harper.militaryracquetball@gmail.com](mailto:harper.militaryracquetball@gmail.com).



Top: Participants from the MRF Military National Championships

Center: Adaptive Racquets Clinic in Montgomery Alabama

Above: 3 WallBall World Championships Nellis Air Force Base Color Guard's Salute

Photos by Steven Harper



## EXCITING 40+ RACQUETBALL ACTION COMING TO YOU

### 40+ Players Needed

We understand that the 40- to 49-year-olds of our sport have lots of life commitments—more than the retired folks, for sure. We would love to have more “younger” NMRA players, but of course we know that family and work obligations come into play. In response to some of the perceived drawbacks to participating in multi-day events, we do a few things to try to accommodate the still-working dads and moms to provide value for their racquetball travel dollar:

- Scheduling back-to-back matches so tournament days can be planned for remote workers.
- Moving the tournaments around the country to provide opportunities to sightsee and visit friends.
- Providing lower prices on host hotels so the whole family can join us—especially on the weekends.
- Helping to find roommates for all players to drastically cut hotel expenses.
- Cutting tournament entry fees in half to allow younger players to try us without investing too much compared to a local (no airfare or hotel expenses) tournament.
- Waiving NMRA dues for first-time players of all ages. We want you to try our events!
- Providing tasty meals all week to minimize restaurant visits. This includes our famous banquet with a fun program, slideshows, and announcements.

If you have ideas to make it easier to attend one of our tournaments, please let us know.

### Round-Robin Format and Collegiality

NMRA tournaments are known for their amount of matches and the collegiality during play. Self-refereeing is the norm and, when everyone plays everyone else in that division, new friendships naturally happen. Give us a try soon!

### Pro Stop in Portland 2020 – Kickoff to 50 Years of National Masters Racquetball

For years, I have wanted to combine into one event a mature-player round-robin NMRA tournament with top-level pro action as well. With the gracious help of Hank Marcus and Wendell Pelham, we announce a special tournament, December 1-3, 2020, in Portland, Oregon. Our NMRA round-robin event will end just as the IRT pros take the courts for their qualifying round matches. A fundraiser and banquet will take place on the last night, and then the NMRA players are welcome to play in the single-elimination “Live Like John” (Pelham) Fundraiser IRT Tier 1 pro stop. Details and online entry will be available soon.

### Lifetime Memberships

At our last NMRA Board of Directors meeting, we decided to introduce an NMRA lifetime membership for anyone who wants to eliminate the concern of having their NMRA membership expire and combine that with the great feeling of making a nice donation. For \$750, will ensure you are on our member list forever! Of course, you can wait until you are 80 years old and get a free NMRA Lifetime Membership. Your choice! Contact me for details.

### Next NMRA Tournaments

See you at an NMRA event in the near future!

- St. Louis, Missouri – March 25-28, 2020 – Host hotel is the River City Hotel & Casino
- To Be Determined – July 2020 – We are still working on this one...
- Portland, Oregon – December 1-3, 2020 – NMRA + IRT Pro Stop Fundraiser – Don’t Miss This One!

For more information on NMRA events, memberships, donations, and/or 40+ racquetball, contact Cindy Tilbury at 303.888.4461.



Left: Terry Kisling & Rod Southwood - Men's 50+ Doubles Gold at the 2019 NMRA International Championships Chicago  
Right: Tom Carroll & Ed Esparza - Men's 50+ Doubles Silver at the 2019 NMRA International Championships Chicago





# CALENDAR of EVENTS

For the latest in USA Racquetball Sanctioned Events, visit [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com)

\*Denotes World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) Sanctioned Event

Date	Event	City	State	Location	Email
Jan 3 - Jan 5	2020 PA State Doubles Championship	York	PA	Athletic Club of New York	travis@pa-racquetball.com
Jan 3 - Jan 5	2020 Show In The Snow	Cumberland	RI	Forecourt	calpender@gmail.com
Jan 3 - Jan 5	WOR AZ IV Battle Clash of Chavez	Laveen	AZ	Cesar Chavez Park	azor@azoutdoorracquetball.com
Jan 10 - Jan 11	2020 Pinchshot.com Racquetball Blizzard	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Jan 11	Harvey's Holiday Park Shootout	Fort Lauderdale	FL	Holiday Park	jeffery.wright@sunbeltrentals.com
Jan 10 - Jan 12	Arcserve Series - MN State Singles Champs	Minneapolis	MN	University of Minnesota	vperrault3@gmail.com
Jan 10 - Jan 12	2020 Sunset Winter Blast Junior Tournament	Portland	OR	Sunset Athletic Club	paul@maduellassociates.com
Jan 10 - Jan 12	Blizzard Bash 2020	Centennial	CO	Goodson Rec Center	bsmyth@ssprd.org
Jan 10 - Jan 12	Florida LPRT Pro/AM	Davie	FL	David Posnack JCC	msfeb14th@icloud.com
Jan 10 - Jan 12	2020 ND Minot Open	Minot	ND	YMCA Minot	knowles007@yahoo.com
Jan 11 - Jan 12	2020 Cowbell Shootout	Lodi	CA	Twin Arbors Sports Club	ellistyle@comcast.net
Jan 17 - Jan 19	Mid-America Doubles Racquetball Classic	Salina	KS	Salina Family YMCA	knelson@salinaymca.org
Jan 17 - Jan 19	2020 Wintergreen Classic	Laurel	MD	SportFit Total Fitness Racquetball Club	peakracquetball@gmail.com
Jan 17 - Jan 19	2020 WSMRA 31st Annual National Champs.	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	scl314@aol.com
Jan 17 - Jan 19	Longhorn Open	Austin	TX	University of Texas: Austin Gregory Gym	utlonghornopen@gmail.com
Jan 17 - Jan 19	2020 Atlanta Championships	Lilburn/Atlanta	GA	Recreation ATL	info@recreationatl.com
Jan 17 - Jan 19	2020 Rally for our Warriors	Peabody	MA	Boston Sports Club - Peabody	solomonracquetandsports@gmail.com
Jan 23 - Jan 26	42nd Lewis Drug Pro/AM IRT	Sioux Falls	SD	Sioux Falls Family YMCA	lewisproam.director@gmail.com
Jan 24 - Jan 25	2020 MOHSRA Doubles Tournament	St. Louis	MO	MOHSRA	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Jan 24 - Jan 26	2020 51st Florida State Singles Champs.	Sarasota	FL	Sarasota Bath & Racquet Club	info@florida-racquetball.org
Jan 24 - Jan 26	2020 WRA Doubles Championships	Spokane	WA	Spokane Club - Downtown	richcarver@washingtonracquetball.org
Jan 24 - Jan 26	2020 ISRA State Doubles Championships	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness	laurelmDavis@comcast.net
Jan 24 - Jan 26	New York State Doubles Championships	Cortlandt Manor	NY	Premier Athletic Club	bkshea@optonline.net
Jan 24 - Jan 26	2019-2020 ECRC Meet 4	Warren	NJ	Warren Health & Racquet Club	vanschalkwykr@hotmail.com
Jan 24 - Jan 26	2020 Sweet Caroline LPRT Grand Slam Pro-Am	Greenville	SC	Sportsclub Greenville MAIN	scrball@hotmail.com
Jan 24 - Jan 26	Grand Canyon State Games Winter 2020	Tempe	AZ	Sun Devil Fitness Complex	dprattski@cox.net
Jan 31 - Feb 1	2020 Pinchshot.com Midwest Champs.	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Feb 1	MERC - Case Western Reserve University	Cleveland	OH	Case Western Reserve University	jlevine0013@gmail.com
Feb 1	WOR AZ V Battle D-Day Chavez	Laveen	AZ	Cesar Chavez Park	azor@azoutdoorracquetball.com
Feb 5 - Feb 9	2020 National Doubles Championships	Tempe	AZ	Sun Devil Fitness Complex	risherwood@usaracquetball.com
Feb 7 - Feb 9	Apex Open	Arvada	CO	Apex Racquetball and Fitness Center	brent_t_anderson@yahoo.com
Feb 13 - Feb 16	Beaver Classic	Corvallis	OR	Timberhill Athletic Club	durbin_rob@comcast.net

# CALENDAR of EVENTS



Date	Event	State	State	Location	Email
Feb 14 - Feb 16	State Seniors	Dallas	TX	Landmark Fitness Club	truittjlarry@gmail.com
Feb 15	2020 Missouri HS League JV3 & MS	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Feb 15	MERC Regional - Ohio State University	Columbus	OH	The Ohio State University	jlevine0013@gmail.com
Feb 20 - Feb 23	2020 ISRA State Singles Championships	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness	cherylkirk@aol.com
Feb 21 - Feb 23	Motor City Rollout	Mt. Clemens	MI	Total Sports	ccvanhoose@comcast.net
Feb 21 - Feb 23	2020 Mount Rainier Open	Seattle	WA	Washington Athletic Club	taylormasonry08@yahoo.com
Feb 21 - Feb 23	Life Time / Gearbox Tournament Series	Austin	TX	Life Time Fitness - South Austin	jlmprok@yahoo.com
Feb 22	2020 Missouri HS League Boys Team	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Feb 22 - Feb 23	2020 ORA State Singles, Doubles & Collegiates	Columbus	OH	The Ohio State University	ganim@mac.com
Feb 23	2020 Missouri HS League Girls Team	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Feb 26 - Mar 1	2020 National High School Championships	Portland	OR	Multnomah Athletic Club	risherwood@usaracquetball.com
Feb 28 - Feb 29	Oklahoma State Singles & Doubles	Cushing	OK	Cushing Youth Center	sportsline-fred@hotmail.com
Feb 28 - Mar 1	2020 Northeast Collegiate Regional	Albany	NY	Court Club	vanschalkwykr@hotmail.com
Mar 1	WOR AZ VI Battle Target Tolleson	Tolleson	AZ	Tolleson High School	azor@azoutdoorracquetball.com
Mar 6 - Mar 8	Arcserve Series - Hall of Fame 2020 March	Minneapolis	MN	University of Minnesota	vperrault3@gmail.com
Mar 7	Madness Round Robin Classic	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	dwhitley@vettasports.com
Mar 12 - Mar 15	35th Annual Shamrock Shootout/IRT	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness	petersgeoff@hotmail.com
Mar 13 - Mar 15	Life Time Mansfield 2020 Spring Break	Mansfield	TX	Life Time Fitness	cjsand03@gmail.com
Mar 18 - Mar 22	Oregon State Championships	Portland	OR	Lloyd Athletic Club	brianancheta1@yahoo.com
Mar 19 - Mar 22	2020 Beach Bash, presented by Splathead	Hollywood	FL	Garfield Street Courts	worflorida@gmail.com
Mar 20 - Mar 22	New Jersey Open Racquetball Championships	Warren	NJ	Warren Health & Racquet Club	jonathan@wearrollout.com
Mar 25 - Mar 28	2020 NMRA National Championships	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Racquet Sports - Concord	cindy.tilbury@att.net
Mar 25 - Mar 28	2020 National Intercollegiate Championships	Baton Rouge	LA	Louisiana State University Student	risherwood@usaracquetball.com
Mar 27 - Mar 29	2020 WRA Singles Championships	Seattle	WA	Rec Complex WA Athletic Club	rocco@washingtonracquetball.org
Mar 28 - Mar 29	2020 PA State Singles Championships	Chalfont	PA	Phila. Sports Club at Highpoint	ben@pa-racquetball.com
Mar 28 - Mar 29	2020 Spring Splat WW Event	Frisco	TX	LA Fitness Frisco	k.sendrey@weberandcompany.com
April 3 - April 5	WOR AZ VII Final Battle	Glendale	AZ	Bonsall Park	azor@azoutdoorracquetball.com
April 3 - April 5	2020 Capital City Classic	Tallahassee	FL	FSU Leach Center	capitalcityball@gmail.com
April 4 - April 5	Aggieland Classic Fall 2020	College Station	TX	Texas A&M Student Rec Center	toddzidek@tamu.edu
April 17 - April 19	No Strings Attached Open	Tucson	AZ	Tucson Racquet & Fitness Club	maximus@utmax.com
April 30 - May 3	World Singles and Doubles Championships	Highlands Ranch	CO	Highlands Ranch Rec Center	hiserj@me.com
May 14 - May 17	Southern Oregon Classic	Grants Pass	OR	Club Northwest	brianancheta1@yahoo.com



# Ashaway MultiKill® 17 Cruises Through UnitedHealthcare US OPEN

By Steve Crandall | Vice President, Ashaway Sales & Marketing



While the main competition for this year's UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships played out in the fabulous "made-for-TV" portable racquetball court at the Target Center's Life Time Fitness facility in downtown Minneapolis, more action was underway at the Lawler Sports booth where racquet technician Ian Titus was hard at work stringing racquets and tallying statistics.

While 732 players from 13 countries fought out some 1,273 matches before Kane Waselenchuk and Paola Longoria were crowned Champions, hardworking Ian strung over 200 frames. Of these, some 60% were strings made by Ashaway Racket Strings, Ian reported. Of the Ashaway strings, the clear leader was Ashaway's newest MultiKill® 17, noted for its soft nylon feel and polyurethane-based durability -- which comprised 40% of those strung. Ashaway's Zyex-based PowerKill® 17 and UltraKill® 17---both notable for their power and tension holding abilities—followed with 25% each. Longtime Ashaway staple, nylon-based SuperKill® strings, accounted for a 10% share.

The clearest observable trend in stringing to emerge from this year's US OPEN Racquetball Championships was higher tensions. According to Ian's analysis, most string tensions ranged well into the mid-30s, with the lowest racquet strung at 28 lbs. and the highest at 40 lbs. "We believe these higher tensions are an effort by players to gain greater ball control," said Ian "the String King" Titus, owner of Lawler Sports. "There are two reasons for this: first, all manufacturers are producing more powerful racquets these days; second, today's elongated racquet head designs require longer strings. These combine to produce a very stretchy, very bouncy string bed, and stringing tighter will enhance control."

greater ball control," said Ian "the String King" Titus, owner of Lawler Sports. "There are two reasons for this: first, all manufacturers are producing more powerful racquets these days; second, today's elongated racquet head designs require longer strings. These combine to produce a very stretchy, very bouncy string bed, and stringing tighter will enhance control."

## In Fond Remembrance: Lola and Ray Markus

In the summer of 2019, the racquetball community lost two of its best. Lola Markus passed away on August 25 (her 88th birthday), just over two months after her beloved husband Ray passed on June 19. Married for 68 years, Ray and Lola raised three children, Barry, Donna, and Tim, in Park Ridge, Illinois.

Lola and Ray were long-time members of the Lattof YMCA in Des Plaines, Illinois. To commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary, they began funding a youth racquetball instruction program there, and the program is still going strong today.

Ray was a photoengraver at RR Donnelley & Sons and loved the racquetball family. He was always ready with a smile, a hug, and a corny joke. He made everyone feel like an old friend, and he was Lola's biggest fan.

Lola was a member of the NMRA Hall of Fame and the Illinois State Racquetball Association (ISRA) Hall of Fame, and she received many other honors through the years as well. Lola played racquetball since the sport's early days and was an inspiration to generations of racquetball players. She was a true example of what racquetball is all about: a fierce competitor on the court and a friend to everyone off the court. She loved racquetball, chocolate, ice cream, and dancing. Lola played in most Women's Senior/Masters tournaments as well as many World Seniors and NMRA events, and she was still competing in her 80's. Lola was always ready for an adventure wherever she went.

Lola and Ray made everyone feel special. They were true racquetball ambassadors, and they will be missed.

Kendra Tutsch, President, Women's Senior Masters Racquetball Association

Cheryl Kirk, President, Illinois State Racquetball Association



Photo by Cheryl Kirk



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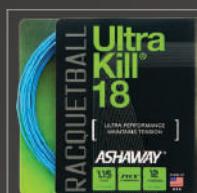
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