

INTERNATIONAL

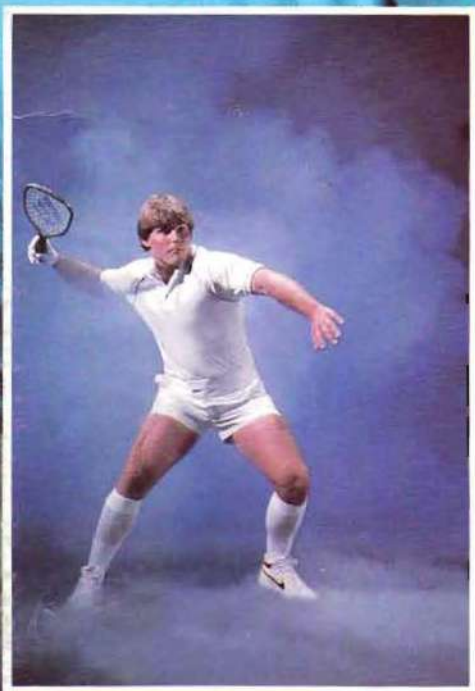


RAC

NOVEMBER 1983 Vol. 1 No. 1
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THE PASSING SHOT

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THE BIRTH OF
HIGH-TECH RACQUETBALL

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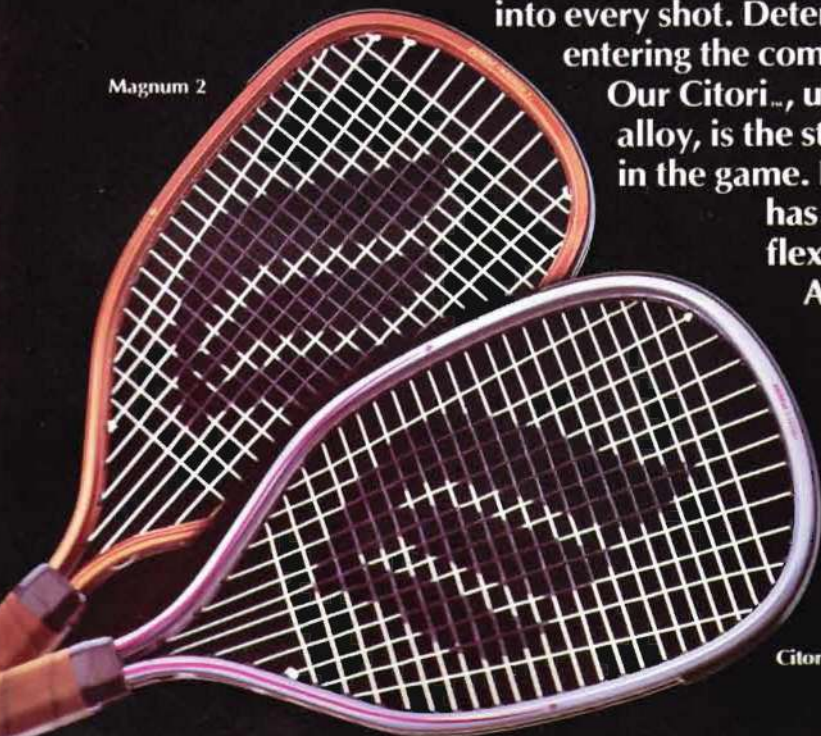
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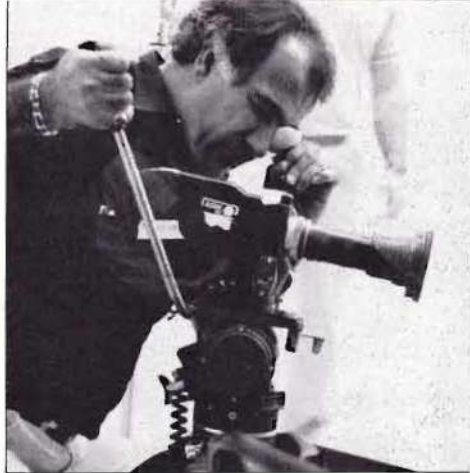


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Vol. 1 No. 6

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November 1983



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RACQUETBALL**



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George Forman

What's George Forman Got to do with Racquetball?

George Forman is a big man and he seemed even bigger looking at him through my camera's viewfinder as I stood there in New York City. I took a picture, of course. But what, you may ask, was a publisher of a racquetball magazine doing in New York next to George Forman? Well, publishing puts one in strange places sometimes, so let me explain.

George Forman wears Pony shoes when he boxes and Pony Shoes is very proud of the fact. He sells shoes. I am sure you are all aware that many professional athletes are signed by sporting goods manufacturers to represent their products. It is a major source of their income. Racquetball is no different. Marty Hogan is signed with Pro-Kennex. Mike Yellen is signed with Ektelon. Greg Peck is signed with DP Leach, and so on. These pros hawk the wares of their sponsors by wearing them when they play, by posing for ads that run in magazines and, when it is important, by showing up for personal appearances. That's where George Forman comes in. The massive Mr. Forman was putting on a little show for the folks at the Sporting Goods Manufacturer's Association Trade Show in New York City.



Jason Holloman
Publisher

Now, a trade show is a very important occurrence. Let me paint you a picture of the one in New York, which is probably one of the largest. How many sports can you name? Let's see, there's football, basketball, soccer, tennis, racquetball, volleyball, squash, rugby, fishing, camping, and hunting which are common

activities in the world. There's swimming, wrestling, fencing, polo, running, aerobics, and then there's weightlifting, ping-pong, darts, jarts, badminton, croquet, and hockey. All these and more were represented there in New York along with the various peripheral products like string manufacturers, health food dealers, Gatorade, glues, grips and all sorts of geegaws. Now cram what must be hundreds of manufacturers and distributors onto four giant floors and presto! You have a trade show.

But why are they there? To sell. Buyers from all over the world come to compare this product with that and to see what's new in their particular area of expertise. New racquets, balls, shoes, nets, dart feathers, weight equipment, it's all there if you're interested and thousands of buyers are. (The gravity rack, or whatever you call it—you know the one where they strap your feet into shackles and turn you upside down—was there in every shape imaginable.) Big buyers like Sears, K-Mart, Oshman's, and J.C. Penny spend millions of dollars in one day.

Naturally there is a wee bit of competition, so the manufacturers drag out



One floor at the New York SGMA show

their stars to add a little prestige to their products. Thus the likes of George Forman for Pony are seen. Addidas had Hershel "No-Neck" Walker signing autographs in their impressive booth, and Marty Hogan and Mike Yellen put in appearances for their sponsors.

Now that I look back on it, racquetball made an impressive showing in New York. No backwater little runt of a sport anymore, racquetball booths were everywhere. Many times I was stopped by interested buyers who somehow have the uncanny ability to read your name tag at 50 feet and call you by name. "International Racquetball, huh?" they'd muse and then give me the ritualistic hand shake and business card, "Give me a call next week." I was very proud of our sport!

It took me three days to take in all of the exhibits and in the meantime, I got to meet the people who have made racquetball into one of the most exciting sports in the world. Good people, too, with companies like Wilson, Penn, Sla-zenger, Right-Gard, Bata Shoes, Champion Gloves, DP Leach, to name just a few. They treated me and each other with great respect. While I was there, a meeting of the new Racquetball Manufacturer's Association took place. This is an organization of powerful companies inside the sport of racquetball and their policies could have tremendous influence over the growth of racquetball. It was exciting to be around these decision makers. It is because of the manufacturers and their competition for your money that we have better racquets, better courts, better balls, better shoes and a better sport.

The show was very successful. Most manufacturers admitted that after two days they had sold enough equipment to have a very good year. To me, that's an important sign of the strength of our sport in the marketplace. It will mean more players going to clubs, more sponsors willing to fund bigger tours and more advertising for our magazine which in turn will help International Racquetball give you better and more colorful issues. I wish you could have been there. Besides, New York is really not as bad as people make it out to be. Where else could you get a meat knish and meet George Forman? ❧



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PLAYING POLITICS



Drew Stoddard
Editor

"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor."

Henry David Thoreau

One of the most interesting things about being involved with something like racquetball while it is still in its earliest growth stages is that the motives of people within the sport become so immediately obvious. When things are in the formative stages, and there is so much work to be done, it doesn't take very long to separate those who have a genuine concern for the future, from those who simply want to take what they can and move on.

Not long ago I was talking to a top ranked professional player, one of those few fortunate individuals who has already become rich and famous simply by playing tournament racquetball. When our discussion inevitably turned to the current situation in men's professional racquetball he said to me, "I really can't get involved with all the politics—I have a couple more good

years in this sport and I want to make as much as I can in that time." My first reaction was that he was joking—this was, after all, his very livelihood we were talking about. I realized, after a few seconds, that he was deadly serious. We stared at each other for a moment, as people in different worlds do, and ended our conversation. "My friend," I thought to myself as I walked away, "you have a very long life, and a very short career, ahead of you."

Somehow, over the last few years, it has become fashionable in our society, and certainly in our sport, to say "I don't want to get involved with the politics." Actually the statement is usually something more like "I wish all the politics were over and I could just go back to playing racquetball." At the risk of offending some who I consider my friends, let me say I believe that statement is utter nonsense. It's a little bit like a carpenter saying, "I don't want to pound any more nails, I just want the house to be finished."

When I was in college, I heard a very good professor define politics as nothing more than that force within a given society that either holds people together or drives them apart. "Whenever anyone says they don't want to become involved," he said, "what they are actually saying to you is: I'm afraid; I can't understand; or, I don't care."

Getting involved with the politics of racquetball is *not* something to be ashamed of. In fact, at this point in the sport's progression, individual involvement is probably the greatest possible expression of one's concern. What many so disdainfully call "the politics of racquetball" is actually nothing more or less than the efforts of a number of concerned individuals who are engaged in the process of laying the foundation upon which this sport will build for decades to come. And every person who has an interest in the direction this sport will travel, has a right and a responsibility to help determine what that direction will be. Were the politics to cease at this moment, racquetball in general, and men's professional racquetball in specific, would continue the aimless drift we have all witnessed during the last two years.

Let me give you a couple of examples of what I'm talking about. A few weeks ago, in casual conversation with Luke St. Onge of the AARA, I found out that Mike Yellen had recently given a \$1,000 gift to the AARA junior program. When I asked Mike about it a few days later he said, "racquetball's been really good to me and I just wanted to help."

One of the best examples of involvement I've seen in this sport is Bud Muehleisen's selfless effort to help the men with their players' association, the PRO. Bud was virtually "drafted" into a position on the ad hoc committee, without really knowing he was a candidate. He accepted the position knowing full well he had little to gain, and that it would be his job to act as point man, and to take the flak from Charlie Drake once Drake decided to lash out against the PRO.

Any person who claims that these two men acted out of self-interest is simply ignorant of the facts. They became involved because they care deeply about the *quality* of the sport we will soon hand to the next generation.

Our sport sits at this moment at a crossroads unlike any we have ever seen, and it is there largely because of the dedicated effort of a few unselfish and farsighted individuals. But all they can do is lay the groundwork, and that is now nearly complete. Specifically, the men's professional game will not advance any further without the direct participation of the men themselves. If enough of the men say "I don't want to get involved," the movement will simply stagnate and die, and the real losers will be the players themselves. The men will never again be able to claim that they were powerless to act. The opportunity now exists to structure the pro game any way we see fit—if the movement fails now, no player will ever again have the right to complain about the state of professional racquetball.

The days of "let George do it" are gone. George doesn't want the job—he doesn't even play racquetball anymore. Let's not blow it now because, like the pro who couldn't see beyond his own wallet, we didn't have the guts, the brains, or the heart to get involved.

ANDREWS, TEXERIA, GONZALEZ TAKE TOURNAMENTS

Ed Andrews won the seventh annual Fat-City Open in Stockton, California, by defeating Scott Oliver in the final, 15-8, 13-15, 11-7. Andrews upset number one seed Jerry Hilecher, and Oliver took out Bill Sell and Don Thomas, to reach the final.

Earlier, Bill Sell of Huntington Beach came from way behind to upset the number two seed, heavily favored Gerry Price of Castro Valley, in three games, 2-15, 15-13, 11-9. (Results on page 21)

Guy Texeria of Huntington Beach, ousted favorite Bill Sell to win the \$4500 Wilson Trueblue Shootout in Newport Beach, California. Texeria needed three games to eliminate Sell, 11-15, 15-13, 11-3.

Marci Drexler came from behind to defeat Karin Walton-Trent in the women's open final. (Results on page 22)



Ed Andrews

Sergio Gonzalez, the reigning Florida state champion, pulled off the upset of his career by downing Ruben Gonzalez (no relation), the number six ranked professional in the world, in the Ektelon/Holiday Inn Grand Prix in Orlando, Florida. Sergio defeated Ruben, 13-15, 15-12, 15-4. Earlier, the young Gonzalez earned another upset by defeating Rich Wagner of Riverside California, in the semifinals, 15-8, 15-3. (Results on page 23)

REMAINING FLORIDA TOURNAMENTS CANCELLED

The remaining seven events that were to have been staged as the Ektelon/Holiday Inn Grand Prix Series, have been cancelled due to unexpected difficulties among the series promoters. The first event of the series was held September 15-18, in Orlando, Florida. According to Norm Blum, one of the promoters of the events, the series was cancelled when a number of irregularities became apparent with one of the

principals in the venture. At this time there are no plans to reschedule the events, according to Blum.

U.S. TEAM VICTORIOUS IN COSTA RICA

The United States racquetball team, which is fielded and supported by the AARA (American Amateur Racquetball Association), won their third international competition by sweeping to victory in the IARF (International Amateur Racquetball Federation) Regional Games in San Jose, Costa Rica, October 12-15. The team will now return to the United States to prepare for the most prestigious international event in racquetball—the World Games in Sacramento, California, in July of 1984. (Complete editorial and photographic coverage of the Costa Rica event will be included in the December issue of International Racquetball).

IRSA TRADE SHOW SET

The 1984 International Racquet Sports Association (IRSA) National Convention and Trade Show has been set for February 16-21, 1984. The convention, which annually attracts 700-800 racquet and multi-sport club owners and developers from throughout the nation and Canada, will be held at the New Orleans Hilton and Towers the week prior to Mardi Gras.

The IRSA National Convention is the only time during the year when owners of commercial racquet sports/fitness clubs congregate in the same place and time for the purpose of comparing notes, exchanging ideas, and working together to improve their profitability.

For further information on IRSA, the Convention or Trade Show, call 617-734-8000, or write IRSA, 112 Cypress St., Brookline, MA, 02146s

DRAKE SENDS LETTER TO PLAYERS

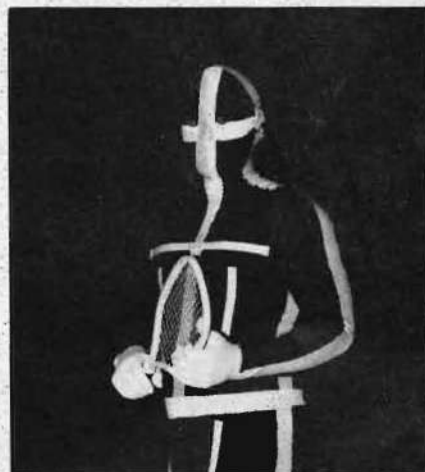
Charlie Drake, the head of the O.I. & D., and the agent for Marty Hogan and Bret Harnett sent a letter to all men professional players, dated September 23, 1983, informing them that Hogan and Harnett would not support the Professional Racquetball Organization (PRO). While Hogan had previously made clear his non-support for a players' association, the letter was the first public acknowledgement that neither Hogan nor fourth ranked Bret Harnett would support the PRO.

"Marty and Bret," Drake stated in the letter, "will support professional racquetball any way they can. They recognize the need for a strong players' association but cannot support the

existing Ad Hoc committee and their efforts to control professional racquetball."

Although Drake gave no reason for their non-support, it is known that Drake strongly objects to any association that spreads the voting power among all the professional players. Recently, Hogan and Harnett attempted to form their own association composed of the top four ranked professional players.

The PRO has set their next meeting for Friday, November 11, in Vancouver, British Columbia, during the Vancouver pro stop.



Dave Peck

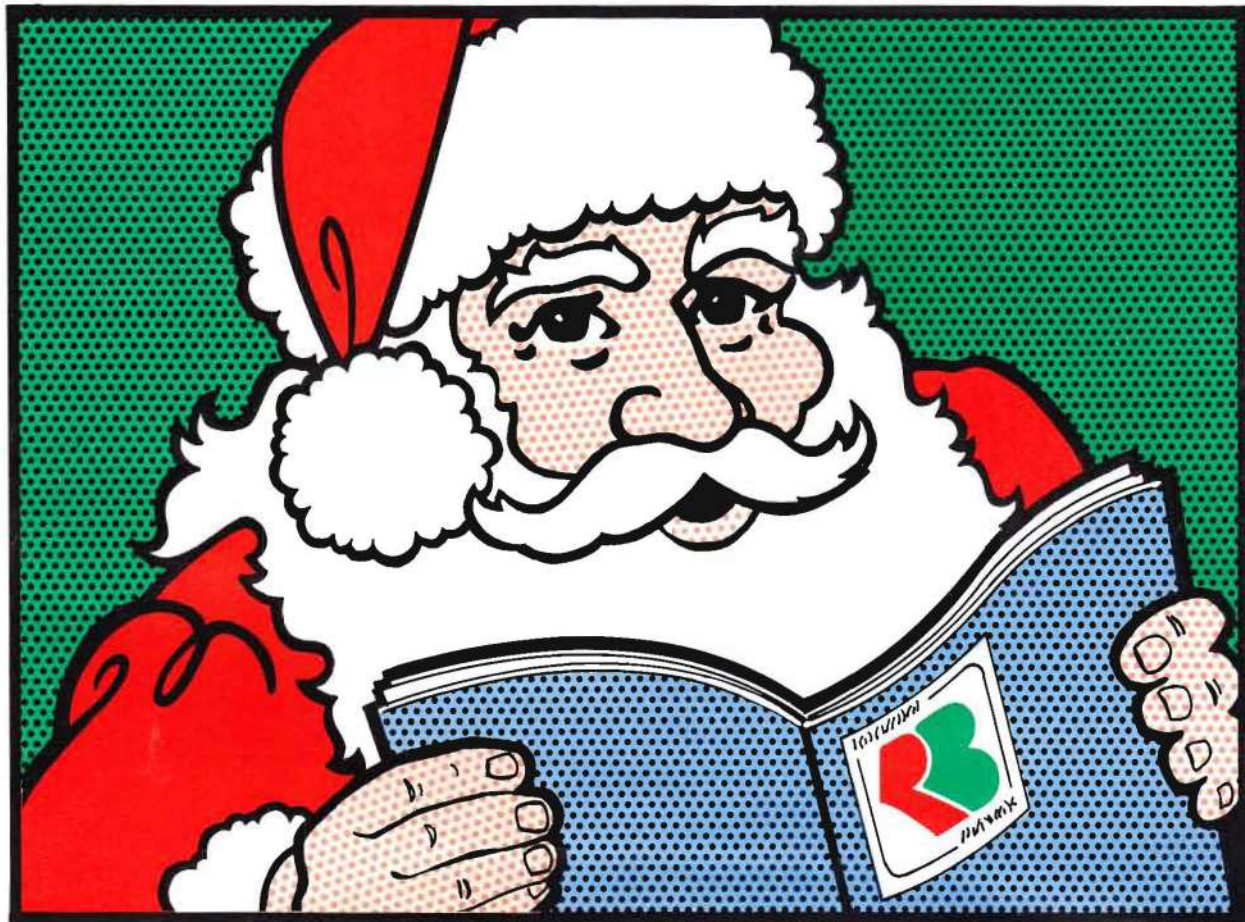
SYBERVISION ENTERS RACQUETBALL MARKET

One of the most advanced learning techniques in sports, Sybervision, has completed work and is ready to market a unique video-tape instructional package for the sport of racquetball. The Sybervision system, which is produced by the California based American Research Institute of Neuromuscular Behavior, has been applied during the last few years with impressive results in the sports of tennis, golf, basketball, football, and skiing. The Sybervision racquetball tape features Dave Peck as the instructional model, and utilizes an unusual non-verbal teaching method. The tapes should be available by early November. (See story on page 24)

CORRECTION

In the editorial of the September issue of International Racquetball, we stated that the current president of the International Racquet Sports Association (IRSA) was Richard M. Caro Jr. That information was out of date. The current president is Todd Pulis. We apologize to both Mr. Caro and Mr. Pulis for the error.

HELP SANTA



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Help Santa give a gift that lives all year. Send a subscription of International Racquetball for only \$18 (12 issues) to your racquetball friends for Christmas. Or, if you want, send a gift to yourself, just drop us the enclosed card and we'll pass it on to Santa. If you want to give more than one subscription, make a list, check it twice and send it on. This offer expires December 31, 1983. Have a Happy Holiday from International Racquetball!



A Casual Conversation with Dick Smith

At the Sporting Goods Manufacturer's Association convention in New York, International Racquetball got a chance to sit down and talk with Dick Smith who recently replaced Bob Larsen as the representative for racquetball in the AMF Voit company. AMF Voit has been a strong supporter of racquetball and has joined other companies in the formation of the Racquetball Manufacturer's Association. The following conversation discussed that newly formed organization.

How did the Racquetball Manufacturer's Association come about?

Well, as I understand it, the racquetball manufacturers have in the past all gone their separate ways to promote their individual lines and secondarily, promote the sport. Somebody finally decided, about a year ago, that maybe we should follow the lead that's been established by the SGMA and try to put together an entity that would promote the sport—to build the sport rather than the individual brands. The shake-out benefit would be that everybody in the sport world would benefit.

How does everyone benefit from the organization of the RMA?

Obviously, if you have a ten percent share of something and then it grows by a hundred percent, then your ten percent share has gained in value. By organizing our efforts in given directions, we can help everybody.

Who can join the Racquetball Manufacturer's Association?

Right now I believe that the membership could possibly be open to anyone who is involved in the sport. That is, there may be different types of memberships that we could make available to the different facets within racquetball. That may be something we decide in the future. It will probably follow the pattern that has been established in other such organizations. In other sports there is a kind of a manufacturer's level and then other memberships according to their interest. But the policy really hasn't been established yet.



Dick Smith of AMF Voit

Which companies are involved now in putting the RMA together?

Voit, obviously, Ektelon, Leach, Penn, Wilson, and Olympian were some of the people involved in the most recent meeting, but we would like to see others join. The more the merrier. Anyone who would like to approach the thing from a co-operative standpoint and see the sport grow.

There have been some problems with certain individuals in the past that have dominated the sport. Do you think that the lack of an organized group has hurt the sport?

There have been some problems, yes, but I don't think you can pin all the problems of racquetball on a few personalities and we don't view the RMA as a

cure-all for those problems either.

How does a manufacturer's association work? Do you target specific areas for improvement?

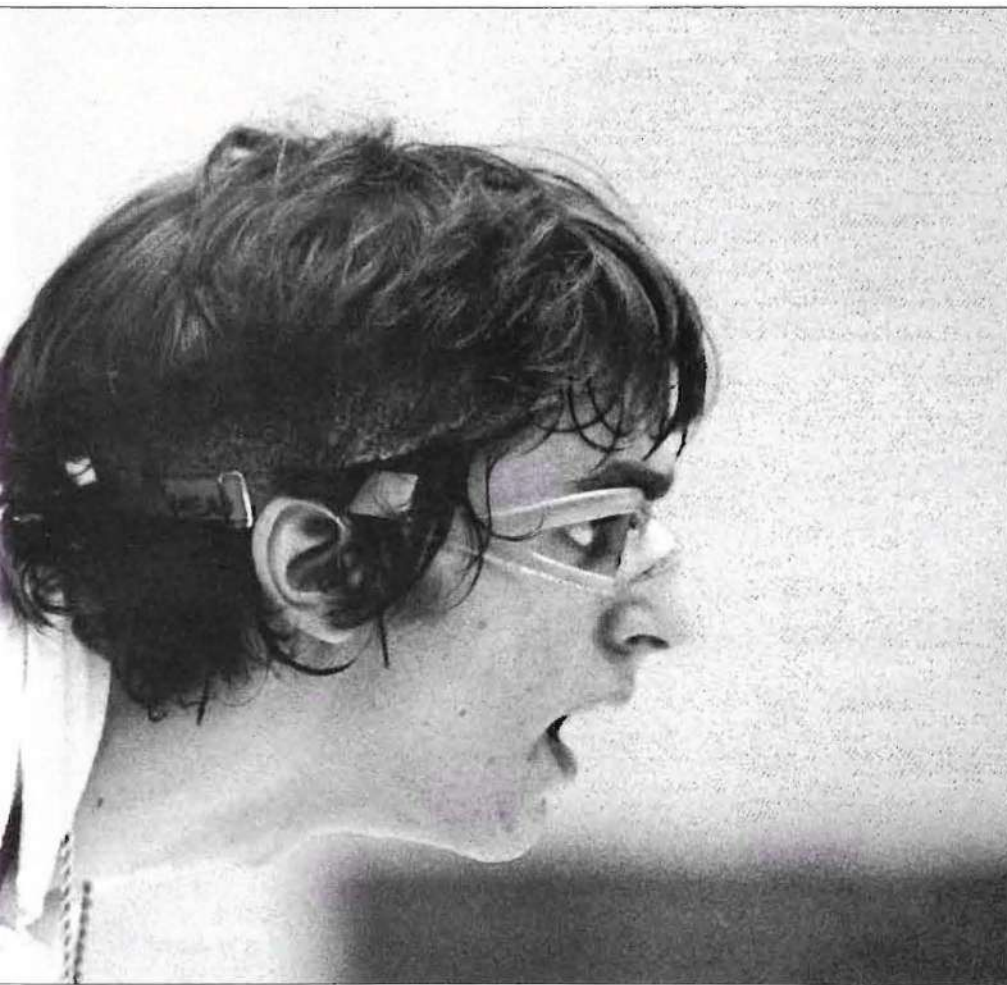
The first target was to establish some kind of a pro tour organization with the manufacturer's association being the nucleus and that there would be an individual at the Racquetball Manufacturer's headquarters who would be responsible, who would be the pivot to bring on board some sponsors for the pro tour.

Would this be for both men and women pros?

Yes. Of course the women have their organized tour now, but eventually they might interface.

To Make Mandatory?

by Drew Stoddard



nia State University there were 20 eye injuries. If all 26,500 racquetball courts across the nation had a similar accident rate, the total would be 70,000 for the sport of racquetball alone! If that is true, and there are some who feel even those numbers are low, every racquetball player has a 1 in 100 chance of sustaining a serious eye injury within each 15 month period.

What concerns Hirschfelder most is the increase in eye injuries within the sport. In 1979, for example, 1,988 injuries were reported rising to 2,891 in just two years. Obviously, the increase in the number of players didn't grow at

nearly that percentage.

Fortunately, there has been some effort to solve this problem within certain areas of the sport. There are, for example, a number of states, such as Montana, where no player is allowed to participate in any tournament without eyeguards. The AARA has begun to take on the eyeguard problem, particularly in the junior ranks. But from the standpoint of the sport in general, very little has been done to combat the problem.

The solution is obvious: Racquetball must begin now, moving toward a policy which requires every player to wear eyeguards in order to participate in any

tournament in this country. The sticky part of that solution comes from the professional players themselves, a number of whom do not wear eyeguards. And, frankly, in this area their claim seems to be valid—most people have to learn to play with eyeguards, and at that level of play there are very few serious eye injuries. In nearly ten years of playing and watching professional racquetball, I have never seen a single eye injury—I have witnessed dozens among amateur players.

The issue really comes down to one of example. Although I'm sure the pros are tired of hearing about their responsibility to the sport, in this case the problem will only be solved if professional players, the most visible individuals within our sport, take the lead. To their credit, many top ranked pros have taught themselves to play with eyeguards for this very reason. But some still have difficulty and do not. Everytime a top ranked professional steps on the court without eyeguards, or removes his eyeguards during a match, in front of hundreds of amateurs and juniors, we take another giant stride backwards. A mandatory eyeguard policy among the pros would help the sport immensely, but it is something that must come from the players themselves.

For the rest of the sport, it is vital that we do what we can now, to bring an end to this debilitating and humiliating problem. It is not fair to the youngsters coming into racquetball to give them the impression that they can play this game safely without eye protection—they cannot!

No one in racquetball would even consider walking onto a court without a wrist thong on their racquet—we made that a rule years ago. We didn't hesitate to protect ourselves from the flight of the racquet. Now let's finish the job and protect ourselves, and our children, from the far more furious flight of the ball.

It is time we exercise our responsibility to this sport, and do what we all know we should. It is time to make eyeguards mandatory. ❧

There has been some speculation that it might be a good idea to put a commissioner over all the sport.

You mean amateurs and pros?

Yes.

That sounds a little autocratic. I think what the sport needs more than anything right now is promotion and that's what we're currently talking about in the RMA. More visibility, more opportunities for people to participate.

What type of opportunities would that be?

Well, the pro tournaments were chosen as the first target because it is so visible. It really is the most visible thing in racquetball. But we're certainly not drawing the line there. We're talking about expanding the responsibilities and duties of this organization to youth and the women's areas and hopefully we can influence the secondary school systems to promote racquetball.

That would mean you'd have to work with the school systems to build courts.

Yes, and that's one of the things the Racquetball Manufacturer's Association can do very well. The RMA is funded by the manufacturers through dues and funds raised at trade shows like this one and one entity of the Sporting Goods Manufacturer's Association (SGMA) is the Athletic Institute which produces films, printed material, film strips, slides, etc., for the school systems on how to play various sports. We would very much like to promote that area. Overall, we think the time is ripe to do these things because we think the direction of the sport is very positive right now.

That's the feedback that we get at International Racquetball. One area of the sport that is concerned about the future of racquetball is the clubs. Will the RMA help the clubs?

Definitely. The bottom line for clubs is renting court time and if the RMA is instrumental in doing all it wants to do, the pay-off for the clubs will be more people on the courts.

There are some individuals within the sport who still seem to feel that racquetball is winding down in momentum. Do the manufacturers feel that is the case?

No. I think that everybody feels that the sport has stabilized and if anything it is on the upswing again. The upcoming season should be a good one for all of us.

Is It Time Eyeguards

Every one of us who is involved in any way with racquetball knows that one of the standard topics of conversation within this sport since the day it was invented has been the importance of eye protection. It is one of those subjects to which we pay occasional homage by casual discussion with our friends at courtside. Yet, for over a decade we have discussed and dismissed what may now be turning into one of the worst problems within the sport, particularly at the grass-roots level. Occasionally, some brave soul will step forward to suggest that we make eyeguards mandatory, only to be hooted and hollered back into obedient silence.

Now, two powerful national groups have publicly declared racquetball's eye-injury problem a "preventable epidemic," and have severely criticized the sport for failing to take action to institute what they call a "ridiculously simple solution." Simultaneous reports were recently made public in the Journal of the American Medical Association and by the National Society to Prevent Blindness. The statistics quoted in those reports are staggering, and the most obvious piece of information is the one we all hoped we would never hear; racquetball has, by far, the highest incidence of serious eye injuries of any sport in the world.

"People can make a difference—that's the moral of the story of these statistics," says Dennis Hirschfelder, director of eye safety programs for the National Society to Prevent Blindness. "But, education just doesn't seem to work. You can tell people about the danger, but it usually takes a close call or a serious accident to get them motivated."

The figures he presents show that racquetball has the highest percentage of serious eye injuries, followed in order by squash, paddleball, tennis, badminton, swimming, hockey, baseball, basketball, soccer, and volleyball.

Actual figures from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission show



that in 1981 there were 38,568 injuries reported from racquetball, of which 2,891 were eye related (7.5 percent). By contrast, the next highest major sports of tennis and badminton reported 30,269 combined injuries, with 1,567 eye related (5.2 percent).

In baseball there were 471,797 injuries reported, with 6,820 of those to the eye (1.4 percent).

These figures, of course, account for only those accidents that are reported. Some data suggests there is a far higher rate of injuries to the eye within the sport of racquetball. For instance, over a 15-month period on six courts at Califor-

Lynn's Racquettes

THREE GIRLS FROM COSTA MESA MAKE A LITTLE MAGIC



Lynn's racquettes show off their Lynn Adams shirts

by Jason Holloman

Lynn Adams, two-time WPRA National champion, has a winning style—in more ways than one. Somewhere along the line Lynn has managed to not only steal the crown of women's professional racquetball, but steal the hearts of three girls from Costa Mesa, California, as well. Their names are Chalon Good, Kim Good and Maureen (Mo) Moore and they have formed a Lynn Adams fan club called "Lynn's Racquettes."

"We wanted to have a club that had Lynn's name in it," said Chalon Good (Vice President) in an exclusive interview with International Racquetball, "and finally someone said, 'How 'bout Lynn's Racquettes?' and we knew that was the one!"

The idea for the fan club was inspired by an article written in the *Daily Pilot*, a

local newspaper in Costa Mesa which Kim Good delivers daily to her neighborhood. It piqued her interest that was reinforced that very same week when the *Los Angeles Times* also ran an article about Lynn. Chance? Perhaps. Destiny? Of course. And the girls couldn't have picked a better person for their fan club. A keen competitor and super sportswoman, Lynn has raised racquetball to new heights.

Shortly after encountering those articles, the three girls, bound by their new admiration for Lynn, began sending her letters, first to inform her of the existence of "Lynn's Racquettes" and then to ask her for more information on her career in racquetball. Lynn responded willingly with pictures and posters and more...

"She gave us some of her shirts like

the ones she plays in," Chalon told us eagerly, "and they have her name on the back. We have a bunch of them. We have enough of them for more members and we'd like to have more join if they're interested."

The shirt off her back. Not a bad gesture, Lynn. In fact, such presents to "Lynn's Racquettes" inspired them to reciprocate. They took Lynn out bowling, raised money through a car wash so they could buy tickets to the Ektelon Nationals and, as Lynn's husband, Jim Carson, explained, "The topper happened on August 28th, our first wedding anniversary. They really outdid themselves."

"They wanted to have a surprise wedding barbecue for Lynn," Jim recounted, "and in addition to decorating the house and cooking the food, they surprised us with a singing telegram. Their Dad told us later that they had wanted to hire a male stripper, but when he informed them that they would have to leave the room while he performed, they settled for a guy in a tux with a bottle of champagne."

Such panache for girls in Junior High School! Still, it sounds like great fun. Especially since they get to work out with Lynn at the racquetball court on occasion which is a natural thing for these girls to do since they are very involved in other sports such as softball and basketball. "They're natural athletes," observed Jim, "and who knows? Maybe Kim, Chalon and Mo will be tomorrow's future pro players. I wouldn't put it past them."

Would you or someone you know like to be a member of Lynn's Racquettes? It's easy. Just write to:

Lynn's Racquettes
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"We want to get a great big group going for her," Chalon added, "because we think she's really great!" I'm sure the feeling is mutual.

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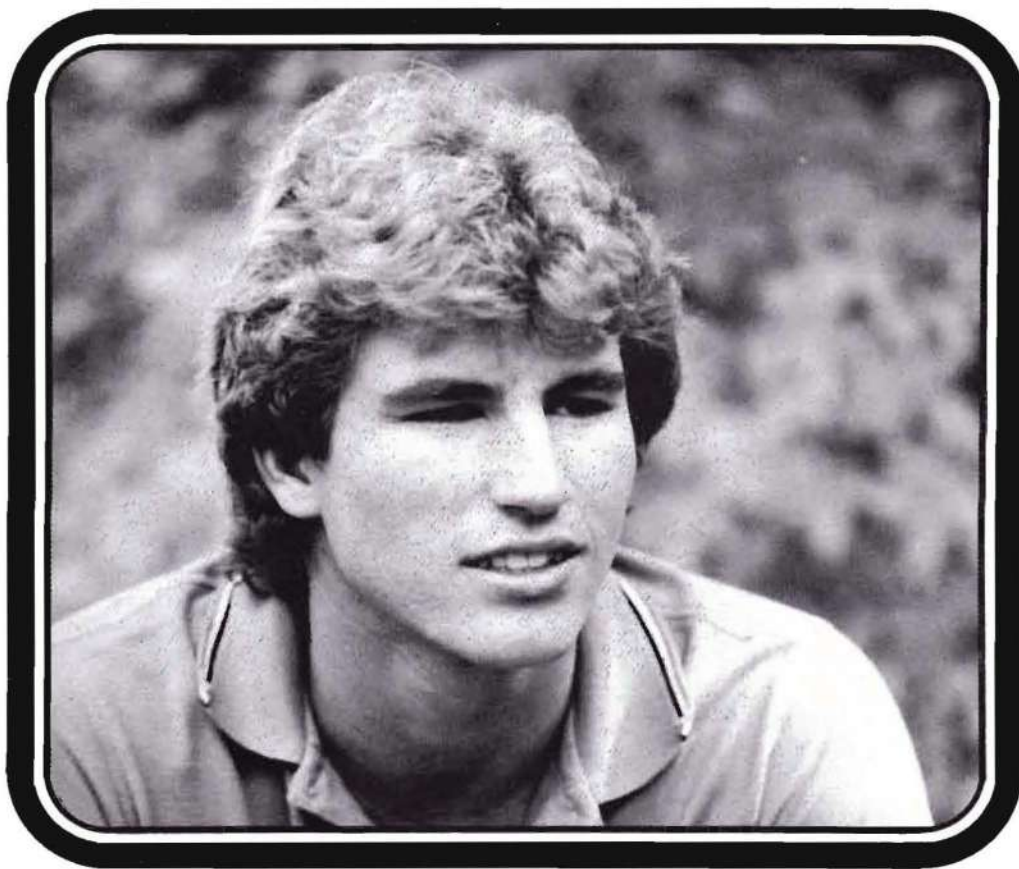
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GREGG PECK

He has gone from "Dave Peck's Little Brother" to one of the most feared players in professional racquetball.

People who have followed men's professional racquetball over the last few years have a hard time taking Gregg Peck seriously. It seems like he has always been there—a tall, lanky, sometimes awkward teenager who used to spend hours at court-side watching the older professionals practice their craft. Mostly, he was somewhere rooting for his older brother David. True, he played in the professional division himself, and even had some early successes against top players. But mostly he was "Dave Peck's little brother," a fixture at David's side as the older Peck fought his way to the top of men's professional racquetball. In fact, Gregg probably had as

many hours invested in that hard-earned National Championship as David did, himself.

So, it is probably understandable that no one seemed to notice when those hours on hours of subconscious programming began to show in Gregg's own game. No one seemed to notice that he had grown into one of the physically biggest and strongest players in the game. While everyone had their eyes on David, Gregg began his own move up the ranking ladder.

Today, there are very few among his peers who do not take Gregg Peck seriously. He concluded the 1982-83 sea-

son the fifth ranked men's professional, and is now just points away from entering the formidable "top four." He has demonstrated the ability to beat virtually every player in the game, with the sole exception of his older brother, a record of which he is well aware. At the age of 17, he became one of the first players to beat Marty Hogan at his peak. Last season he was the last player to defeat Mike Yellen, before Yellen captured the national title. He beat fourth ranked Bret Harnett twice. His tournament finishes included a five-game loss to Ruben Gonzalez in the semifinals of the DP Leach/Catalina National Championships, in Chicago. Gregg strongly influ-

enced the outcome of nearly every event he entered, and was named International Racquetball's Most Improved Player for 1983.

There are now signs that in certain areas Gregg's abilities may even surpass those of his immensely talented older brother. Many believe he is quicker—he is one of the best retrievers in the game. More importantly, he seems to be mentally steadier and far less volatile than Dave, and therefore seems to be immune to the legendary Peck temperament problems. He is a world class sportsman, and has earned a long-standing reputation for being one of the best like players in professional racquetball.

We interviewed Gregg at our offices in Salt Lake City.

What's it like to be the younger brother of Dave Peck? Professionally speaking, do you think it's an advantage always having him there when you play?

It's great to have. Just having a player the caliber of David there to help me relieves a lot of the pressure—to have someone who understands what's going on, who's played these people before, and who knows what pressure is. There have been times—pressure situations—when I've come off the court and he's said something that has nothing to do with the match, something just to make

me laugh, something to break the tension of the moment. That's very relaxing. And I try to do the same for him.

Plus, we know each other pretty well. I know that he likes things a certain way when he comes off the court. So, I can have a drink ready, or get him a towel, or a new glove, or shirt, and he does the same for me. We know what to do for each other to help the other relax.

It also helps when we room together. If I didn't room with him I would stay by myself. The Pecks can be strange people. When we go to breakfast in the morning we never talk to each other—the Pecks are just that way, we don't like to talk in the morning. So, we just sit there and look at the newspaper and don't say anything. That could be a problem with anyone else.

Recently you've had to play each other in a number of big tournaments. Is that a problem for you?

There's no question, the big brother-little brother syndrome is bad for me when we play. It's much tougher for me to play him than it is for him to play me. It's just that for so long I wanted him to win so badly; every time I watched him play I wanted him to win. And that's one of those things that, deep down, is really hard to break. The challenge for me is to decide, deep inside myself, that I really want to beat him. And I do feel like I'm getting closer to that. The first time we

"... I don't want to go to college and end up wondering in ten years if I could have been the best player in the world."

played he just killed me, and that didn't feel too good. I walked off the court and felt like I hadn't given it my best effort. The last couple of times it has gotten better. It's just one of those things; instead of really going for it and putting out, I almost hold back a little bit. It's something that I'm going to have to break.

You played him fairly close in Atlanta. Was it better there?

Even in Atlanta it was still a problem. People who watched that match could tell. But it's hard to break, it really is. It's something that I've never had to deal with until this year. It's a new problem—once I get used to it, I'll be all right.

Something that people don't seem to understand is that a lot of those matches were hard for me not because I was playing David but because it was a new experience for me getting that far in a major tournament. Chicago was traumatic for me—playing Ruben (Gonzalez) in the semifinals. It was the semis of the Nationals and I had never been there before. I'm sure it affected my play a little bit.

You certainly didn't seem nervous in your semifinal match with Mike Yellen in Davison.

I really had a good time in Davison. From the moment the ref said "play ball" I was relaxed and having fun. After the match, even though I lost, I felt really good. That was really the first time I've ever come out of a semifinal match and felt good about the way I played, and felt good about myself. I wasn't nervous—I didn't choke under pressure. I came off the court and had a really good feeling, like all that experience was finally starting to pay off. In fact, I was in such a good mood I started thinking to myself, "Gregg, you just lost, you're supposed to be upset." It was strange.

Last season your ranking jumped from 10th to 5th, and you're putting real pressure on the top four. Can you identify any specific thing that happened to your game that accounts for that jump?

An exhausted Gregg Peck following his first Harnett upset



Yes. I remember I was watching a pro match at one of the tournaments after I had been put out, and I suddenly realized that the guys I was watching were not better than me, and they were top players. That's not to say that I don't respect their talents because they're all tough. But I just realized that physically I was as good, or better, than anyone out there. I just didn't have the confidence. This sounds funny but I used to think to myself, "What are people going to think if I lose to this guy?" What kind of an attitude is that? So I decided that from then on I would just go out and play my hardest—that I wouldn't hold back or worry about what would happen if I lost. It may sound dumb, but ever since then I've kept that attitude. Now, if I lose, it doesn't hurt because I played my hardest. I've found that if you do your preparation, and you play your hardest, you usually win. And you develop a lot of faith in yourself.

How do you account for the fact that your game is so much different than your brother's?

A lot of that is due to how much I

"It's really a confidence builder to know that whether you succeed or not, no one in the family will treat you differently"

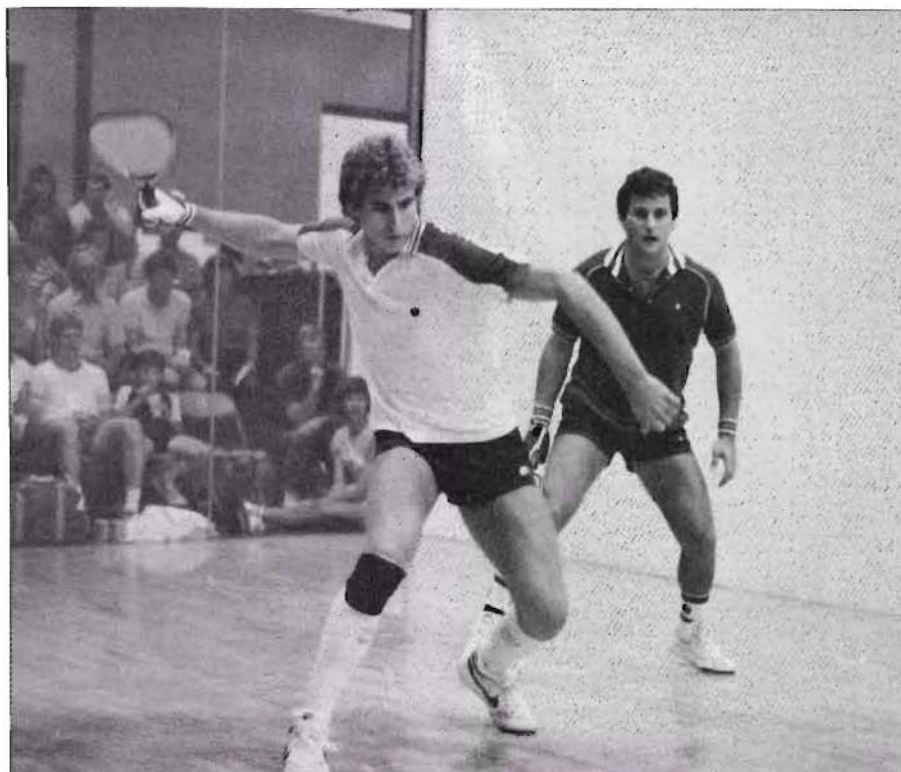


Gregg vs. Dave: "It's something I've never had to face before"

watch other players. When I was younger I watched the pros, particularly Marty, a lot. Marty was hitting the ball harder than everyone else and I noticed that it was an effective way for him to get out of certain situations. So I adopted more of a power game than David. I think, on the average, I use a lot more power than he does. Also, although I was taught to play the way David does, I changed some things so they were more natural for me. That's why everybody is different.

You moved to Austin to attend college. Are you still going?

No. When I graduated from high school, I was already doing fairly well on the pro tour—I had qualified a lot and had even beaten Marty in Omaha. I had dreamed for a long time of being a racquetball professional. My Mom wanted me to succeed in racquetball but she also wanted me to at least try school. She said, "Just try it for a year—go to school wherever you want and try it." I said OK, and enrolled at University of Texas



GREGG PECK

Home: Austin TX

Age: 20

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 190 lbs.

Final 82-83 ranking: 5

Current PRO ranking: 5

Years Playing: 8

Sponsors: DP Leach, Nike, Nautilus

Racquet: DP Leach Graphite 8000

String Tension: 25 lbs.

Favorite Balls:

1 - Voit

2 - Penn

3 - Ram

4 - Wilson

Best Finishes and Titles:

1st - 1980 USRA Jr. Nationals

1981 - NRC Rookie of the Year

1983 - Semifinalist,

DP Leach/Catalina Nationals

1983 - IR Most Improved Player

in Austin. I turned out that I did pretty well in both. At the end of the year I realized I could do better in school, or I could do better in racquetball, but I couldn't do better in both. So I said the time to play racquetball is now—I can always go back to school later. I know the importance of school, but I don't want to go to college and end up wondering in ten years if I could have been the best racquetball player in the world. I decided to go for it. I will never wonder how good I could have been.

What's great is when I talked to my Mom about it she said, "Go—go play racquetball, you're crazy if you don't. All I wanted you to do was to experience school." And I'm glad I did. It's what brought me to Austin which is a great city—it's the perfect racquetball environment for me.

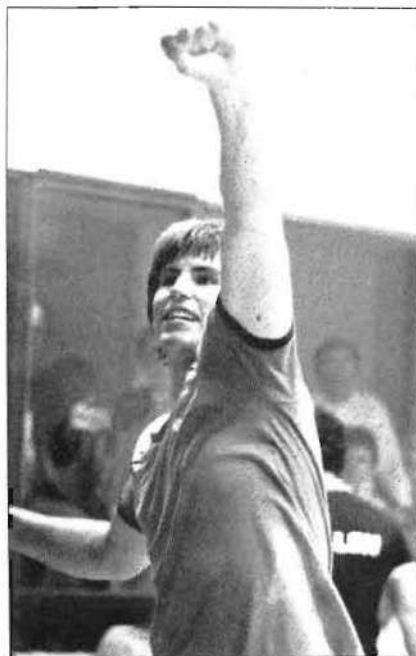
Both you and David talk about your Mom a lot. She must be a great source of strength to you.

The thing that's so special about my Mom is that she never put any pressure on anyone in the family to succeed—whether you define that as money, or fame, or whatever. There was always encouragement to do well, and to try to be the best, but there was never any pressure. She would never say, "You lost, what's the matter?" She always said, "Hey, you tried your hardest, you'll get 'em next time." I know that sounds like the perfect Mom and all that, but it was never fake: It was sincere. We always knew that whether we won or lost, whatever happened she was still there and it didn't matter—it just didn't matter to her. She was always happy when we won, and was excited if we did well. But if we failed, it didn't change how she felt about us.

And her attitude rubbed off on other family members. So not only do I have my Mom's support, but my sisters and brothers do the same thing. It's really a confidence builder to know that whether you succeed this time or not, no one in the family will treat you any differently. It's such an advantage to have a family like that—it's such an advantage.

I think this is a serious problem with a lot of players. I know it is with with some of the junior players I teach. Their parents just push them so far that all they want to do is rebel, and never play racquetball again. They want to just say, "The heck with this!"

You know, you're always going to have the pressure of the outside people; the people in your city, your local paper, and people in your club. But when your Mom and your brother can say "That's OK," it relieves all the other pressure. It



Gregg after Yellen upset in Austin

"That is the big change between open and pro play - you have to be able to put the ball away on the first try."



is a very tense feeling if you think your losing is going to affect other people.

I believe that once you start saying to yourself "I have to win," you can never win again.

How do you compare your own ability with the other top pros?

It's funny. When I sit and watch the top pros play I really get into it. I mean I clap, I get nervous, I get excited just like any other spectator. And for a long time I really couldn't see myself on the court doing those things. Now I can. I can sit and watch and think to myself, "Yeah, I can play at least that well." Once I made that connection, I started winning matches.

It all comes down to what I call "the King effect." You see these guys like Marty and David on the front of magazines, and you read about them in the newspapers, and you hear everyone talking about them and you can't help but get the idea that they're somehow different. You begin to look at them like they're kings. The first thing you know you're on the court with them and you're just overwhelmed by the whole thing. The funny thing is, after you play them a few times you realize they're not different at all—they're not that good. I don't mean that in a bad way, I just mean they're not kings. They're human and they give you set-ups just like everyone else.

There's no question in my mind I can play as well or better than anyone else in racquetball. I can play that quality of game.

Did you say that when you're playing the top pros you get set-ups?

Oh, of course! The biggest misconception is this game is that the top players don't make any errors. We do make errors like everyone. The difference is that at the top level when you get a set-up, you only have one chance to put it away. That is the big change between open and pro play—you have to be able to put the ball away on the first try.

You beat Marty Hogan when you were 17 years old, when he was at his prime. How did that feel?

That was 1980, in Omaha. I remember it pretty well but it all went by so fast, I didn't have any time to enjoy it. That tournament was the first time I had ever gotten out of the round-of-32. I beat Bledsoe, McCoy, and Hogan in the quarterfinals before Don Thomas beat me in the semis.

It was a funny match. I remember going in there absolutely convinced I would win. I had no pressure at all. I don't think he took me too seriously because I won the first game and almost

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Gregg from page 18

won the second (21-20). Then I had him 8-2 in the tie-breaker and I thought to myself "He's history." That was a big mistake. The next thing I knew it was 10-8 and he was serving. I called time out and talked to David about what I should do, then came back in and scored three points. I remember I was really excited because at that time almost no

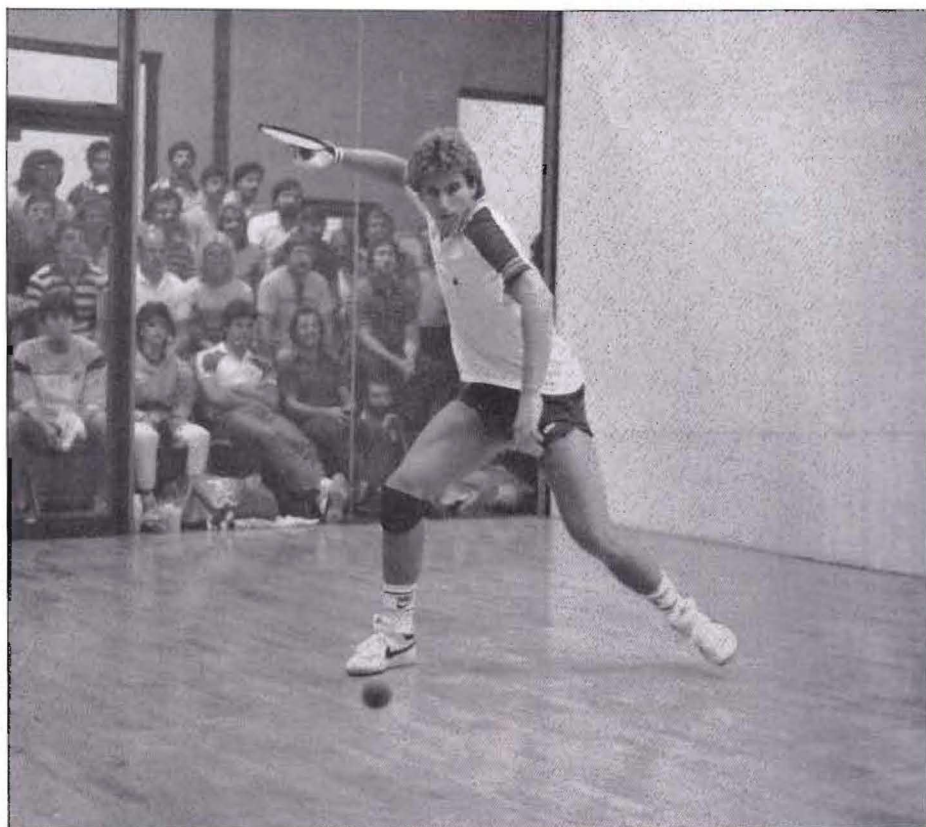
one had beaten him.

It's funny about Marty. For some reason I've never really been afraid of him. I have a lot of respect for his game, don't get me wrong, but I've never really been nervous about playing him. Of course he's beat me a lot since then.

How do you feel about the PRO and the general concept of a players' association?

I think it's necessary for the game if it's ever going to get any bigger than it is right now. I feel there's been an injustice done to the game and the players. I really believe that this game could be so much bigger if a few things had not happened. I feel like it could be on TV, I feel like it could be a lot like tennis. The players could be making more money and be more in the public eye if we just get together and do it the way everyone knows it should be done.

I'm 20 years old. I watched the young tennis player Jimmy Arias in the U.S. Open. They showed his name and underneath they had his year's earnings—\$236,000. That guy is younger than I am. I feel that within my sport I am as talented as he is in his, and I feel like I work as hard or harder than he does, and yet I won't be able to make anywhere near that. I think that if the players get organized and get things rolling, we could have that too. 



Ed An Fat-Ci

Fourth-seeded Ed Andrews came through a very strong draw and held off a challenge by Stockton's own Scott Oliver, 15-8, 13-15, 11-7, to capture the top prize at the 7th Annual Fat City Open Pro-Am Championship. The event was staged at the Quail Lakes Athletic Club in Stockton, California, September 22-25.

Andrews held off the late rally by the sixth-seeded Oliver to walk away with the \$2000 first prize.

En route to the finals Andrews upset first-seeded Jerry Hilecher, 13-15, 15-11, 11-5, fifth-seeded Corey Brysman and Jack Nolan.

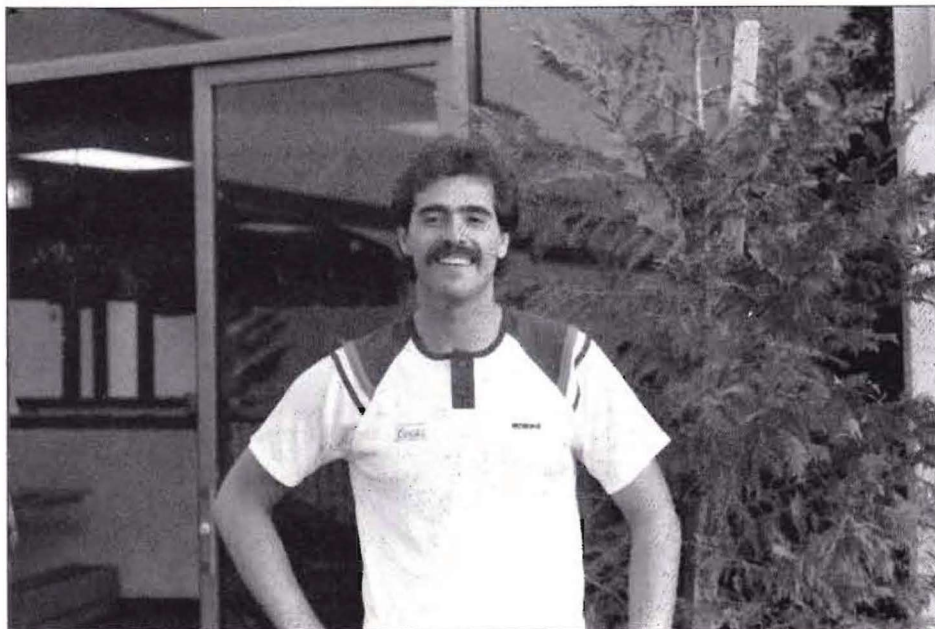
The 21-year-old Oliver, who is a Northern California Champion, had an outstanding tournament, upsetting Bill Sell, currently one of the hottest players in California, in the semifinals, 15-9, 15-7. In the quarterfinals Oliver ousted third-seeded Don Thomas in three games, 16-18, 15-11, 11-8.

Bill Sell pulled off two upsets of his own. After defeating Craig McCoy with ease in the round-of-16, 15-9, 15-10, he came from way behind to throw out the

Scott Oliver



Andrews Takes Pro-AM Open —



Ed Andrews

tournament's number two seed Gerry Price, 2-15, 15-13, 11-9.

In the doubles division Ed Andrews teamed with partner Mark Martino to defeat Craig McCoy and Corey Brysman, 15-13, 15-11. For their efforts Andrew and Martino split \$1200.

7TH ANNUAL FAT CITY OPEN PRO-AM CHAMPIONSHIPS STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA SEPTEMBER 22-25

ROUND-OF-32

Jerry Hilecher def. Arthur Martin; Wes Sneed def. Shawn Fitzpatrick; Paul Marino def. Brian Hawkes; Mark Martino def. Rick Ferrin; Corey Brysman def. Scott Jensen; Bill Hildebrand def. Rick Green; Jack Nolan def. Steve Cutler; Ed Andrews def. Kevin Almeida; Don Thomas def. Mike Bronfeld; Peter Britos def. Craig Kunkel; Mike Romo def. Eduardo Vizcauk; Scott Oliver def. Charles Scott; Craig McCoy def. Mark Plotkin; Bill Sell def. Stan Wright; Ken Garrigus def. Robert Meadows; Gerry Price def. Craig Davidson.

ROUND-OF-16:

Hilecher def. Sneed, 15-7, 15-2; Martino def. Marino, 15-1, 15-4; Brysman def. Hildebrand, 15-7, 15-9; Andrews def. Nolan, 15-6, 15-6; Thomas def. Britos, 15-9, 6-15, 11-5; Oliver def. Romo, 15-8, 15-3; Sell def. McCoy, 15-9, 15-10; Price def. Garrigus, 15-12, 15-5.

QUARTERFINAL ROUND:

Hilecher def. Martino, 15-9, 9-15, 11-7; Andrews def. Brysman, 15-4, 15-9; Oliver def. Thomas, 16-18, 15-11, 11-8; Sell def. Price, 2-15, 15-13, 11-9.

SEMIFINAL ROUND:

Andrews def. Hilecher, 13-15, 15-11, 11-5; Oliver def. Sell, 15-9, 15-7.

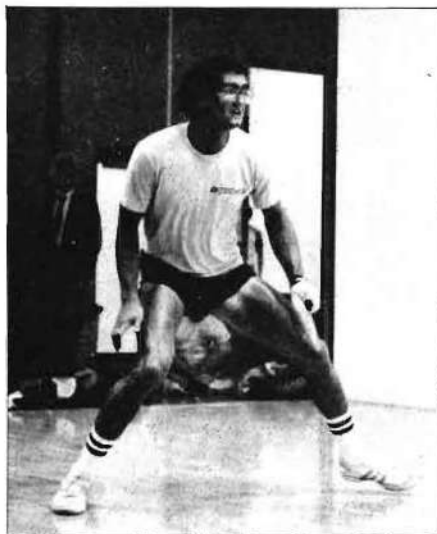
FINAL ROUND:

ANDREWS def. Oliver, 15-8, 13-15, 11-5.

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY: \$5,000

STOCKTON

Guy Texeria Downs Sell At Newport Beach



Bill Sell

Guy Texeria, of Huntington Beach, CA, defeated Bill Sell in the men's open final of the \$4,500 Wilson "Trueblue Shootout." The event was held at the Newport Beach Sporting House, September 29 - October 2. In the women's open division Marci Drexler came from behind to defeat former National Champion Karin Walton-Trent in the final.

Texeria, who plays a highly controlled finesse game, required three games to oust Sell, 11-5, 15-13, 11-3. Guy defeated Steve Fey, Jeff Conine, and Dave Johnson to reach the finals. Sell, who has himself been highly successful in major professional events recently, got by Dan Southern, Mike Gustavson, and Peter Britos.

In an astonishing upset, Dave Johnson, a highly ranked Southern California tennis player who was playing in only his 3rd open event, eliminated Mark Martino in the first round, beating him in a tie-breaker, 11-7. The other big upset in the tournament occurred when Peter Britos defeated touring professional Don Thomas in the quarterfinals, in two games. Britos had lost to Thomas just one week earlier in a round-of-16 match at the Fat City Open, in Stockton. The tournament was not a total loss for Thomas, however; he defeated Lynn Adams in the round-of-16.

The exciting women's open final saw Marci Drexler come back from a 3 point deficit in the tie-breaker against Karin

Walton-Trent. Trailing 10-8, Drexler connected with three screaming forehand kills to take the match from the heavily favored Walton-Trent.

In the men's open doubles, the team of Harding and Sell defeated Conine and Southern.

The event drew over 350 participants and was sponsored by Wilson, Nike, Squincher, Coors Light, and Sports & Fitness.

WILSON TRUEBLUE SHOOTOUT NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA SEPT. 29 - OCT. 2

ROUND-OF-16:

Dave Johnson def. Mark Martino; Clay Ballard def. Paul Olsen; Guy Texeria def. Steve Fey; Jeff Conine def. Gery Berberet; Don Thomas def. Lynn Adams; Peter Britos def. Dolwaine Green; Mike Gustavson def. Mike Alderman; Bill Sell def. Dan Southern.

QUARTERFINAL ROUND:

Johnson def. Ballard; Texeria def. Conine; Britos def. Thomas; Sell def. Gustavson.

SEMIFINAL ROUND:

Texeria def. Johnson; Sell def. Britos.

FINAL ROUND:

TEXERIA def. Sell, 11-15, 15-13, 11-3.

PRIZE MONEY: \$4,500.

Peter Britos



Upset In The Battle Of The Gonzalez's

For a couple of years racquetball players from Florida have been raving about someone named Sergio Gonzalez. No, not Ruben, Sergio. He is a 20-year-old from south Florida who has been the unquestioned state champion for some time. But until now Sergio really hasn't made any waves in the mainstream of professional racquetball. All that may have ended in Orlando last month, at the Ektelon/Holiday Inn Grand Prix. Sergio Gonzalez defeated Ruben Gonzalez, of New York City, in the final, 13-15, 15-12, 15-4. For the record, Ruben Gonzalez was the number one seed in the event and is the number 6 ranked professional in the world.

"I knew my friends were talking about how Ruben would beat me," said Sergio after the upset. "That just made me play harder. Ruben is a great player."

Ruben admitted taking the match lightly. "I couldn't rattle him toward the end. He was too pumped up. I wanted to make a comeback, but when a kid is playing tough, there is no way to stop him."

In the semifinals Ruben defeated Mike Ray of Georgia, while Sergio was scoring another strong upset, sending second-seeded Rich Wagner back to California, 15-8, 15-3. Wagner had barely escaped Freddie Calabrese in the quarterfinals, with a 15-4 tiebreaker win.

In the women's open division Diane



Sergio Gonzalez

Bullard ousted Brenda Poe-Barrett in the finals and Martha McDonald finished third.

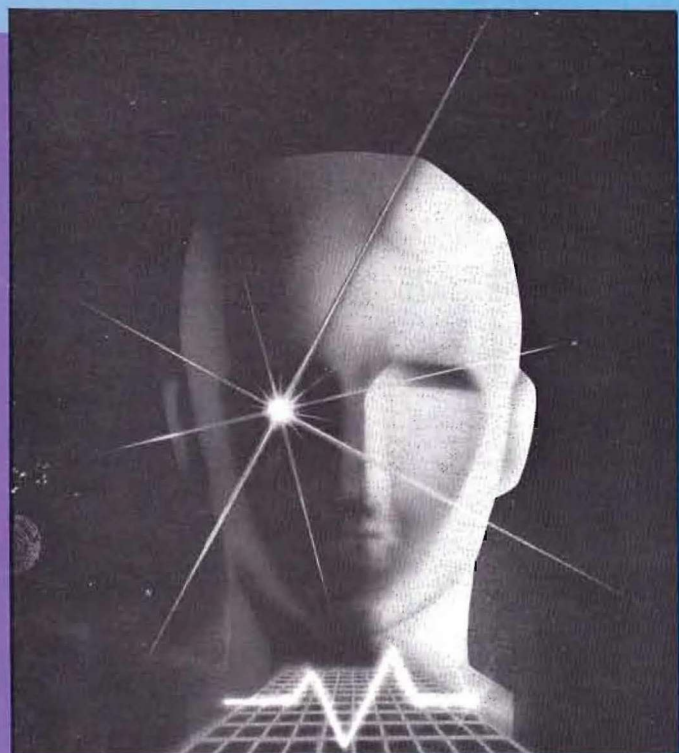
Sergio Gonzalez teamed with Joe Icaza to take the open couples from the team of Hansen/Gautier.

The event was billed as the first of a Grand Prix series that was to have included some 6 tournaments. The remaining events have been canceled due to unexpected difficulties among the Grand Prix promoters.

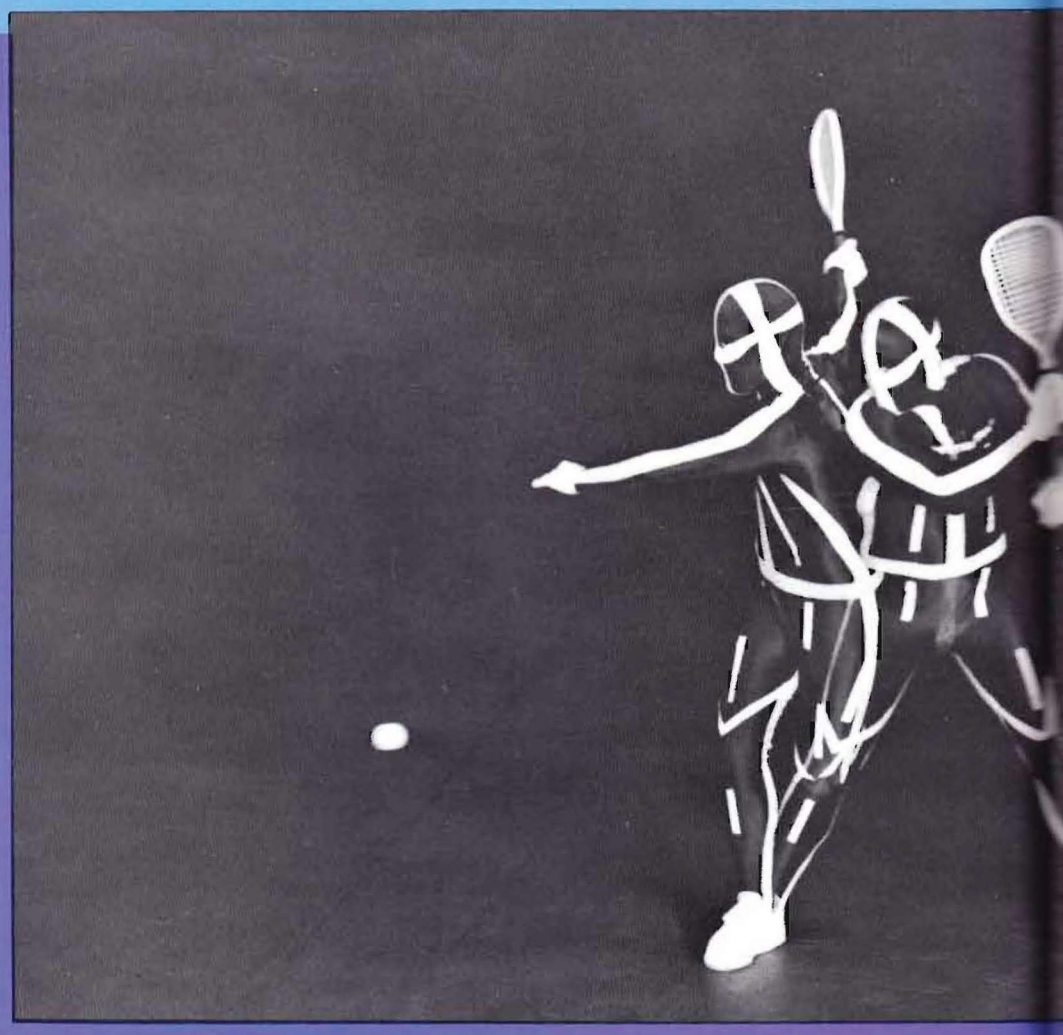
Ruben Gonzalez



ORLANDO



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Ready or not, racquetball is about to become part of a revolution in athletic training!

erVision



The scene is surreal, and riveting. As you float down the fog-filled, mirrored corridor of a plush locker room, you move slowly towards an image—a racquetball player—dressed completely in white. Closer now, you recognize the figure. The synthesized music, intense and haunting, rises as Dave Peck pulls on a white glove, his face taut and serious. In eerie slow-motion he lifts his racquet, turns, walks back down the corridor and disappears into the rising fog.

The fog fades into more fog, but backed now by a deep brilliant blue. Slowly, the player begins to emerge towards you from the fog. He looks right, raises his arm, and gracefully moves into the familiar set crouch of a power forehand. He locks his eyes on a pure white ball that enters from the right side, times its bounce, and strokes swiftly through with his white racquet. Another ball enters—this time a backhand. And another, this time the ball emerges from directly behind you: the player fires it straight towards your eyes. With each movement the fog swirls, with each stroke the music soars.

Now the music dies, and the scene is black—with only the words “The Drive Serve.” Suddenly, you’re standing in a racquetball court, watching at very close range as Dave Peck serves drive serve after drive serve in perfect synchronization with the pulsing music. The speed is normal, the strokes are rapid, and you can hear every crisp, solid contact with the ball. You watch fascinated as you view the

stroke from different angles. After a few moments you realize that your mind has automatically begun to focus on each detail of the stroke, as if attempting to memorize every movement.

As you concentrate, the figure before you is transformed into a white-line stick figure, backed by pure black. The strokes continue in slow-motion, but now your mind becomes even more transfixed as all distractions of form and noise have been removed. You see what you have never seen: the perfect rotation at the hips; the forward glide and rapid coil of the upper body; the constant position of the head; the low point of contact with the ball. Then after a few moments the real figure reappears, the sound is restored, and the rapid strokes resume.

Again the music dies and the scene goes black—now the words say “The Forehand Groundstroke.” Dave Peck returns, and drills forehand after forehand. And once again your mind becomes immersed in a unique, and somehow intensely satisfying, experience. At times, there is the oddest sensation that your body is moving—that your muscles are actually going through the same movements as those of the figure before you. It seems, though you do not consciously know how, that your mind is engaged in a process it not only enjoys but deeply understands.

As the stakes in international athletic competition have risen over the last few

A RECORD THAT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

At first glance, many people have reacted to the SyberVision concept with more than a little skepticism. After all, how can you simply watch a videotape of Dave Peck playing racquetball—a tape that allows you to sensorily experience Dave Peck's perfect strokes—and have the images imprinted so intensely on your brain and muscles that your own abilities will improve significantly? But, despite the fact that the technology is still quite new, SyberVision's success stories are growing dramatically. They have been chronicled in *Newsweek*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The New York Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Denver Post*, and have appeared on *PM Magazine*, and *That's Incredible*, as well as numerous other television programs.

At California State University at Hayward, Steve DeVore recently asked if he could work with the two lowest-ranking members on the tennis team—players who with Hayward coach believed weren't qualified for league competition. Within two weeks on the SyberVision program, both men had broken into Cal State's starting lineup. One of them finished the season with only one defeat; the other went undefeated in league play and concluded the season losing in the finals of the national championships.

After Dick Gould, Stanford's tennis coach, placed his players on the SyberVision program, they proceeded to win the NCAA championship. "In my opinion," said Gould, "the SyberVisions discipline helped my players to play consistently under the intense pressure of competition. It allowed them to relax, concentrate and draw from the reservoir of SyberVision stimulated muscle memory."

Some of the early successes of SyberVision are almost eerie. For example, Oakland A's slugger Mitchell Page after going through two SyberVision sessions in July of 1980, hit two towering home runs on the night of his second session. The last time he had accomplished that feat was in 1977 during his rookie year against Boston in Fenway Park. The video tape Page was using as his programming model was the 1977 Boston tape of the two home runs.

"The afternoon before the game," recounted Page, "I psychologically

coded myself. . . I even pin-pointed the exact spots where I wanted the home run balls to go out."

One of the most interesting success stories involved the Milwaukee Bucks basketball team. "They came to me just before the playoffs in 1981," relates Steve DeVore, "because they were concerned about their consistency in free-throw shooting. They had found that their weakness in the playoffs was free-throws; during the regular season they were shooting 78%, but dropped to 54% in the playoffs."

DeVore devised a program where the players viewed tapes of themselves correctly executing free-throws, over and over. The Bucks finished the playoffs with a nearly 80% success rate at the free-throw line, and the greatest improvement was noticed in the weakest shooters.

But, as convincing as SyberVision's successes have been in the field of athletics, its principles may eventually have even more impact in other areas, notably medicine. Dr. O. Carl Simonton, a Fort Worth oncologist, has adapted the same visualization techniques for his cancer patients. In his book "Getting Well Again," Simonton reports that using this technique over a four-year period with 159 incurable patients, he achieved a survival rate and life span of more than twice the national average. Simonton's theory is that the program was successful because it was able to stimulate the body's immunological system into action.

Perhaps the most far-reaching experiment in the "muscle memory" area is soon to begin at the Children's Hospital in San Francisco. If it succeeds, it could alter the way muscular dystrophy (MD) is treated in the future. The project is structured around research findings by DeVore. In the study, attempts will be made to teach teen-agers afflicted with MD to walk again using the visualization principles of DeVore's program.

Steve DeVore is optimistic about the ultimate outcome of that study. After all, when DeVore was 3 years old, he began learning to walk again using the technique, after having been crippled by polio. He defied the doctors who said he would never walk again.

"That taught me," he says, "just how powerful the human mind really is."

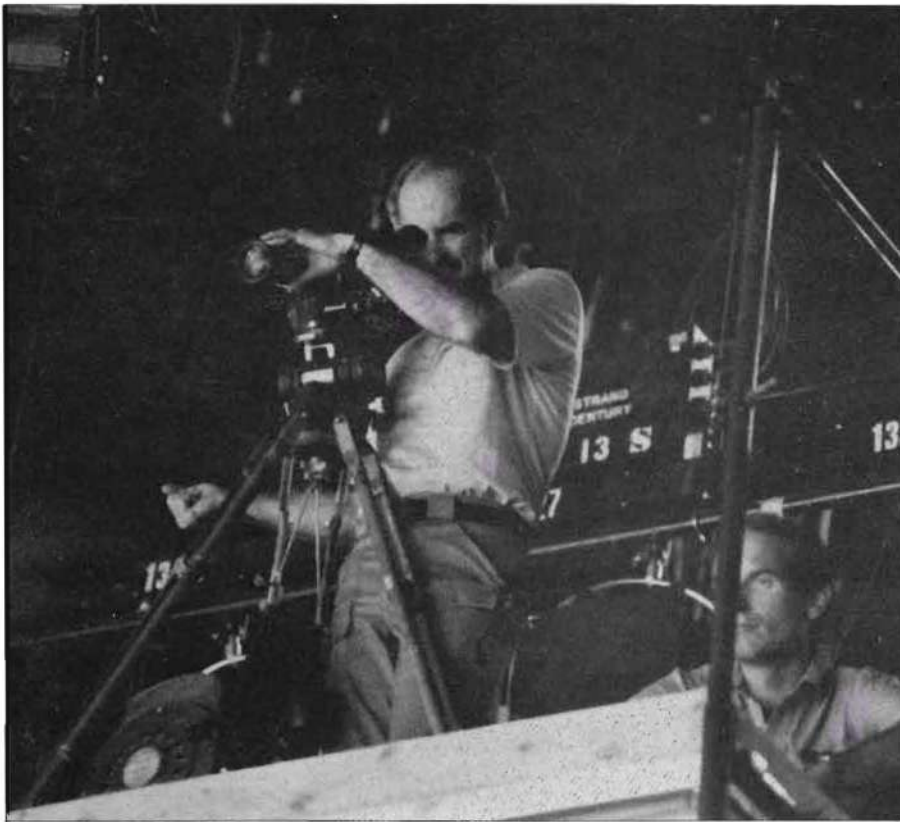


Last minute make-up for Dave.

decades, science has become increasingly involved with exploring new methods of elevating athletic performance.

Until very recently, the Russians have been considered the world pioneers in sports technology, and that effort has unquestionably earned Soviet bloc athletes more than their fair share of Olympic gold medals. While some of that success must be attributed to their highly disciplined training and conditioning programs, we have known for some time that the Russians have deeply involved themselves in a system that is, in effect, manufacturing psychological "clones." The Soviet system is known as Optimal Performance, and it stresses a discipline that combines deep relaxation with hypnotically induced images of what athletes will do in competition.

Meanwhile, researchers in the United States have been working on a different system, which may be even more effective, and have far fewer side-effects, than that of the Soviets. In its marketed form, it is known as SyberVision. SyberVision is a powerful, and theoretically complex, method of "muscle-memory" coding, that is already producing some startling results in both amateur and professional athletics. Following one of the earliest experiments with SyberVision, the Stanford University tennis team unexpectedly won the 1980 NCAA



Capturing the stroke on film

team title (see inset).

Now, racquetball has become one of only five sports (skiing, golf, tennis, bowling) for which a consumer version of SyberVision has been produced. There are some who believe that, because of the unique nature of the sport itself, SyberVision is so well suited to racquetball that it may revolutionize the way the sport is both taught and learned. SyberVision has the potential of providing, for the first time, a simple method for the average racquetball player to dramatically and rapidly raise his skill level. Best of all, it is a very simple process; it can be used by anyone who has access to a color television and a videocassette player.

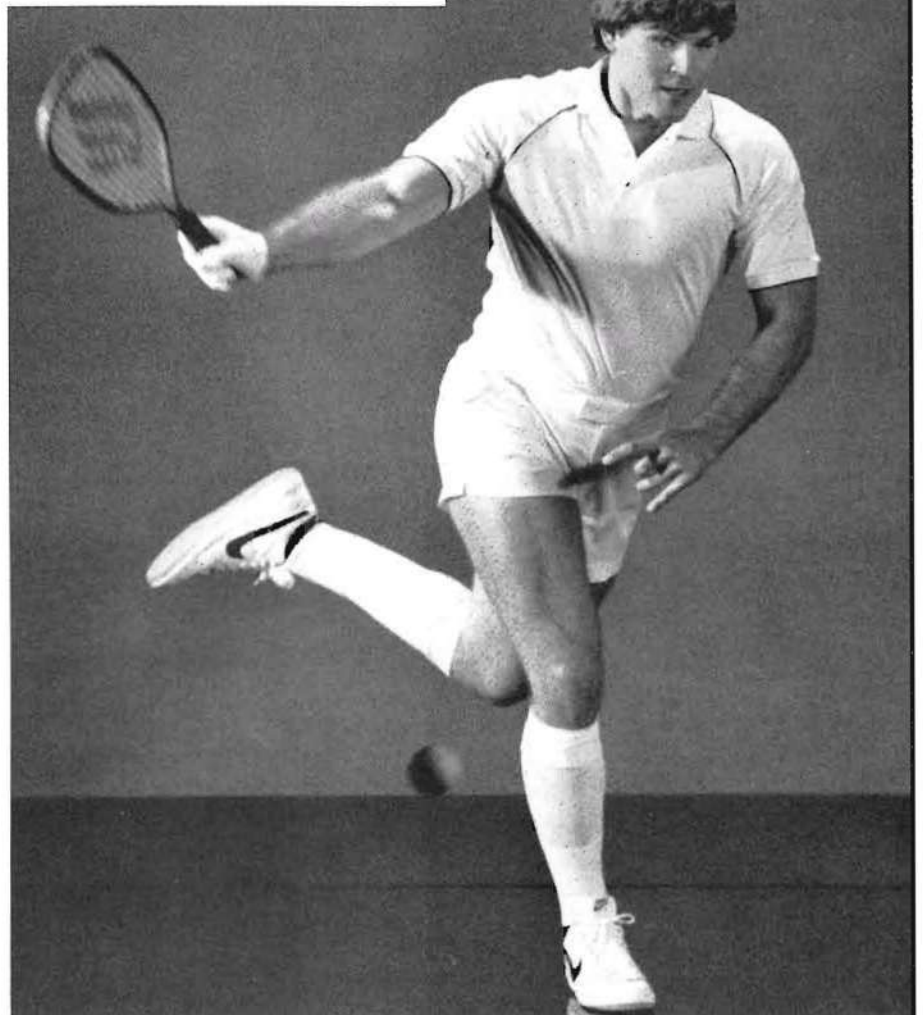
The production of the SyberVision racquetball program, which utilizes former National Champion Dave Peck as a model, was recently completed at the Osmond Studios and the Ridge Athletic Club in Orem, Utah. The finished product, which should be available nationwide sometime in November, consists of a 59-minute videocassette and an instructional handbook. The tape itself has no speaking, but consists of a mood-setting introduction followed by computer-driven sequences of 12 separate strokes that include the forehand ground stroke, backhand ground stroke, drive serve, lob serve, and overhead. Each sequence is interspersed with a fascinating "stick-figure" stroke

comparison.

The principle developers of SyberVision are Dr. Gregory DeVore, formerly of the Yale University School of Medicine and currently an associate professor at the USC School of Medicine, and his brother Steven DeVore, a neuropsychological researcher and current head of the California-based American Research Institute of Neuromuscular Behavior. It is their claim that the SyberVision training process is the most powerfully effective system of sports training in the world—more advanced than any system now utilized by the Soviet Union.

The SyberVision process is based on two assumptions: 1) that we learn a particular skill by emulating a model, whether or not that model is correct; 2) that every time we execute a given skill, say a forehand killshot, we are working

Dave Peck powers a backhand for the SyberVision cameras



from a previously stored "muscle memory." If one can correctly execute that forehand kill in at least one out of 10 attempts, then a "blueprint" of that shot is stored somewhere in the brain's memory.

SyberVision is a comprehensive system of sensory memory reinforcement that allows a person to stimulate and activate that memory "blueprint" until it becomes dominant.

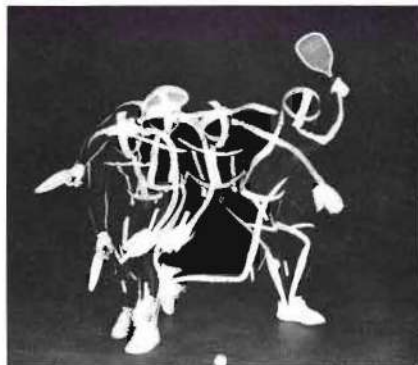
Says Steve DeVore, "Basically we do two things on the tape. First, we provide a perfect model. That's why we chose Dave—people have respect for his ability and his strokes are fundamentally pure. Then, we give the viewer a repetitive, vicarious practice experience—we show them the same stroke over and over again, so we reinforce the neuromuscular memory of that perfect stroke."

DeVore estimates that in a single SyberVision session, the viewer vicariously experiences the perfect execution of over 1000 racquetball strokes. Research indicates that is equivalent to between 10 and 20 hours of perfect, physical, on-court practice.

Although the system is considered by many to be revolutionary, some of the principles upon which it is based are not new. In fact, most of us have expe-



Dave and Gregg wait while the fog rises



rienced the basic phenomenon a number of times.

"Almost everyone," explains DeVore, "has had experience of watching a great player and then having that effect on our own performance. For example, we may watch John McEnroe on television for a couple of hours and then go out and play great tennis for 15 or 20 minutes, before our game returns to normal. In our research, our quest was to find out why that occurs, and then to take that phenomenon and make it a repeatable experience."

But, if the basic principles are not new, the research and the data upon which the SyberVision process is based, are very new. Much of it, according to DeVore, is still unpublished.

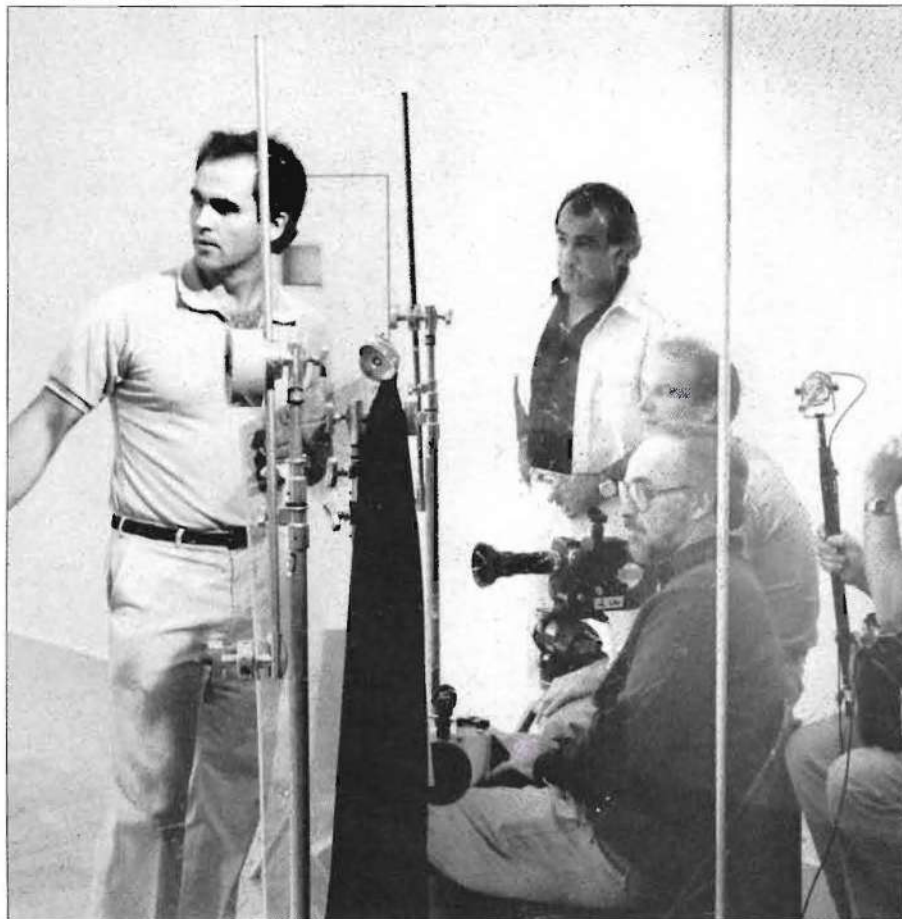
The bulk of that research has been done at Stanford University, by no less than Dr. Karl Pribram, a neurosurgeon and head of the Stanford University Department of Neuropsychology. Pribram is considered one of the top brain researchers in the world.

"Dr. Pribram has been able to determine why this phenomenon (mental modeling) works and give a rational explanation for it," claims DeVore.

What he found was that, because the human nervous system was built for survival, it has the ability to assimilate vast amounts of information very quickly. He was able to identify, for the first time, the brain's actual method of storing information, a process he calls "holographic imaging." He found that the brain's most efficient method of learning is primarily visual; i.e., the brain selects a model and then proceeds to emulate that model. He also noted that given the proper environment, the human mind can learn with a speed and efficiency that is almost unimaginable.

While that principle may not sound

Dirk Cline (left) directs the on-court sequence





Nasser Hamedani of SyberVision checks a shot

revolutionary, its implications shake the very foundation of conventional athletic learning.

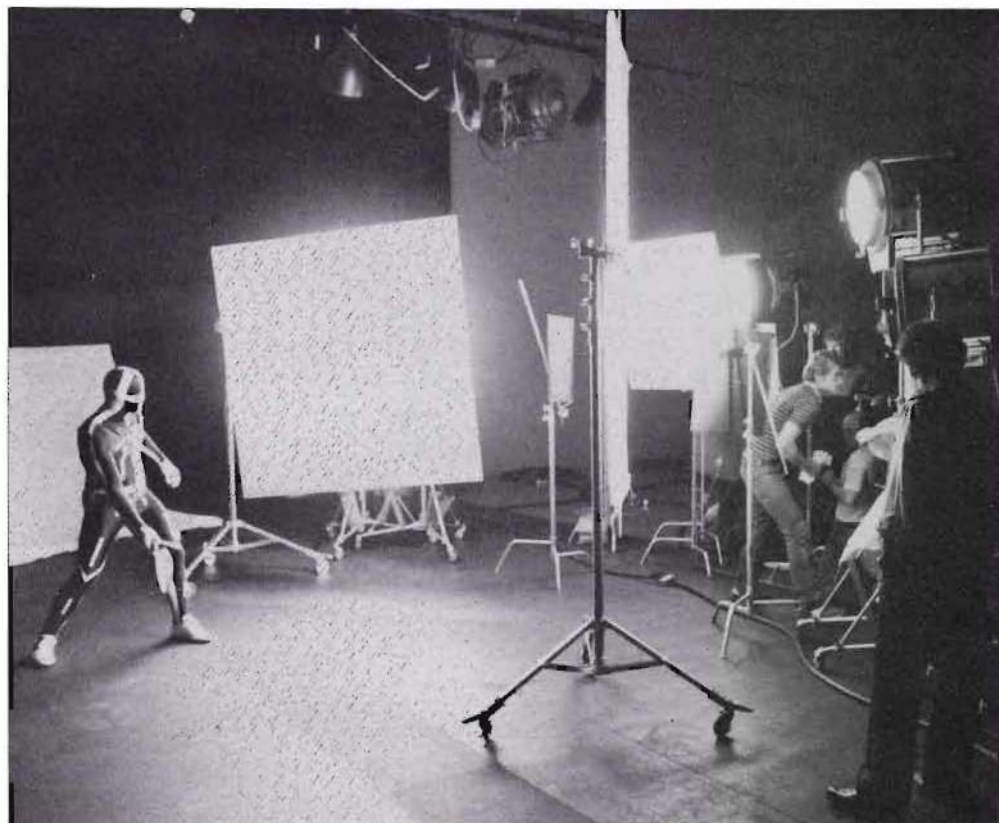
In the past, we have largely accepted the "practice process" as a fact of life; i.e., learning by rote. In racquetball, for example, we have always believed that excellence could only be achieved through hours and hours of arduous on-court practice. Now, the disciples of Dr. Pribram are here to tell us that type practice may not only be unnecessary, it often is counterproductive. They are quite serious when they say that the best way to improve your performance of any given skill is by learning to emulate a perfect model.

"One of the things we began to realize early in our research," DeVore explains, "was that nearly every great athlete we studied had had a common experience; very early in their lives they were

exposed to a very high quality model. They never really had the chance to develop or reinforce bad habits."

"It's been said that practice doesn't make perfect, only perfect practice makes perfect," explains A. Craig Fisher, Ph.D., a sports psychologist at Ithaca College in New York, and author of "The Psychology of Sport." "To practice perfectly, you need a perfect model. But if you hit a tennis ball into the net more often than you hit it over, you are not the best model yourself. And you

So, with all of the sports in the world to which this system could be applied, why racquetball? The explanation for that is simple: SyberVision is most effective in sports that revolve around the repetitive execution of a limited number of specific skills. The five sports for which SyberVision now markets tapes—golf with Al Geiberger, tennis with Stan Smith, bowling with Marshall Holman, skiing with Jean-Claude Killy, and racquetball with Dave Peck—were chosen because they fit that profile



Filming the stick-figure sequences

Spider-man or Syber-man?



won't become that model simply by continuing to hit tennis balls, because you'll keep incorporating your own imperfections into your internal model."

In principle, the SyberVision tape solves that problem by providing the best possible model. How long does it take for the brain to begin emulating that model? "Many people report good results right after the first viewing," says DeVore, "but the system is intended to be an ongoing process. You should notice dramatic results within 30 days."

DeVore is also quick to point out that physical practice remains important. "The athlete still needs to go out and reinforce what he has experienced vicariously during the tape session," he explains, "but if the sessions are frequent, his physical practice should be nearly perfect."

so well.

Although it is still too early to know exactly how effective the SyberVision racquetball program will be, it would appear that racquetball may be better suited to the process than any other sport. Why? Because not only are a few basic skills used repetitively but they must frequently be executed with extreme speed, almost by instinct.

"We think," concludes DeVore, "that racquetball may be the perfect place to apply what we have learned about sports training."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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BUT IT'S GOT TA HUN

A talk with one
of the leaders of
Racquetball's
New Generation

Gerry Price

"THE LITTLE CANNON"



Photo by Jay Solmonson

Interview by Doyle W. Donehoo

Of the multitude of bright young stars that are poised to enter the formidable world of men's professional racquetball, 19-year-old Gerry Price, of Castro Valley, California, is perhaps the brightest. Around Northern California he is known as "The Little Cannon," for good reason. At the age of fifteen, carrying a thundering weight of 205 lbs., Price swept the Junior National Championships of both the AARA and USRA. For three years he has reigned as the NOR-CAL singles and doubles champion as well as sweeping nearly every tournament he has entered in the Western region.

Gerry Price has a history of achieving his goals. He has literally gone hungry to reach some of them—he lost fifty pounds in preparation for turning professional. His goal for last season was to finish in the top eight; he finished eighth—no small accomplishment considering he was not

allowed to play on the Catalina circuit!

His young career already has many milestones, but two of his performances last season stand out. In March, Price won the Crack Shooter Open in Cheyenne, Wyoming, defeating in the process, Ben Koltun, Doug Cohen, Rich Wagner, and current national champion Mike Yellen. The following month Price came within a few points of defeating Marty Hogan in a close five game quarterfinal battle in Toronto, a match which he considers one of his best to date.

Doyle W. Donehoo is a freelance writer living in Fremont, California.

Earlier in your career you were a little heavier, weren't you?

(Laughing) Oh, definitely heavier!

How much did you lose, and how

did you lose it?

When I won the Junior nationals I was up to about 205. Then I went down to 155, and I've since bulked up about ten pounds. I am going to try to get up to 175 before the big tournaments.

I lost it by going on a high protein diet—I ate a lot of chicken and fish. I was taking in about 500 to 600 calories a day, and burning off about three times that much. So I dropped the weight real fast—I almost dropped too much. Since I put the ten back on I feel a lot better.

How did you get started in racquetball?

One night my brother's league was one person short, and I was an alternate for the team. I played a woman who had been playing for a few years. The games were to 31, and I beat her 31 to 30. I guess

that sparked me, because I started playing every day.

Besides winning the Junior nationals, what do you feel have been your personal accomplishments so far?

A big milestone in my career was pushing Marty Hogan to the limit in a match (in Toronto). But beating Mike Yellen stands out in my mind. I respect him the most just because of his style of play, his composure. I like to pattern myself after him.

What do you think about when you step on the court for an important match?

In a professional match I'm telling myself that things are probably not going to go exactly as planned, as far as refereeing and calls go. I'm mentally preparing myself for some bad calls, because I'm not going to get upset about anything like that. I'm going to keep my composure throughout the match, and play to win every point. I won't lose my temper on the court.

How would you characterize your style of play?

People say I have a power game, but I mix in control with it. Most of the time I play the power game, but I also slow it down. Among the top players, I put myself right in the middle.

Compare your playing style and your record with the top four.

Marty Hogan: Marty in my mind, is

probably the greatest player in the world. But in the last couple of years he has shown he does not want to win badly enough. My power is like his, but I use a lot more control than he does. He shoots the ball and takes more chances—sometimes it works, and sometimes it gets him into trouble.

I've played him three times. The last time I took him to the fifth game, and I thought I was going to beat him. But he pulled out a few tricks in the end—he just overpowered me.

Mike Yellen: I've always respected him more than any other player. I pattern my game after him. He is the closest to my game style. He will use a lot of control, and a lot of power—and he is great with both of them. He has the best passing game in the world. And, I would say he is the smartest player in the world.

I think I can beat him again. I know what to do to beat him, and if he is not playing as well as he can, I think I can beat him. He's number one this year, and the pressure is on him—I'm sure he is feeling it right now.

Dave Peck: Dave has been trying to slow the game down. He is more of a control player than he ever was. When he gets a setup, he will smash the ball, but most of the time he is a control player.

I've never played him in a tournament. I'm just waiting to see what happens. If you set him up, he'll kill you. You have to keep him on the run, and in the rear of the court, because when he sets up, he doesn't miss.

Bret Harnett: Harnett, I would say, is worse than Hogan. He will shoot everything—he'll flail everything! It's great when he's playing well, and when he's not, it's not too good.

Do you think professional racquetball is elevating the state of racquetball in general?

Not really. Racquetball is a very unorganized sport right now. It's not really elevating anything. When we get everything tied together, it will be excellent. This sport has so many possibilities, but everybody is afraid to get involved with it right now because of what has taken place in the last couple of years. I wish that someone would put some time and money into it, but I don't think anyone is going to do that until the players themselves show a willingness to do certain things.

How did you feel about the "closed" Catalina tour, and how did it affect you personally?

That is basically why racquetball has

"The things that players get away with have to be stopped. Unless we have a players' association nothing will be done."



Against Hogan in Toronto

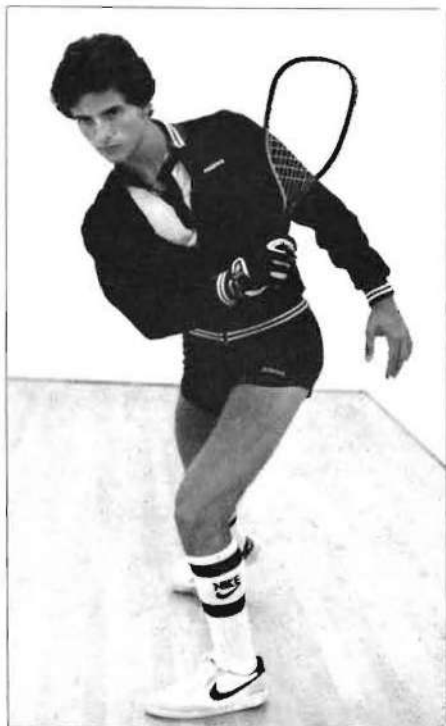
failed—because they closed it off. They told some very talented players that they couldn't play anymore. And that hurt the sport. All they did was create bad publicity about the sport.

Personally, it didn't catch me at as bad a time as it did some of the others. I was young enough (16) when they closed it off that I just decided to play and practice as hard as I could so I would be ready when it opened up. I did get to play in a few tournaments, and that pushed me. And even with the few I played, I still broke into the top eight. I do wonder, in my own mind, where I would have been if I had been able to play all of them.

How do you think the lack of a men's players' association has affected the sport?

It has hurt professional racquetball, and you can tell that by the other sports that have players' associations—they are so much more professionally run. The things that players get away with, the court antics, they have to be stopped.

Photo by Kurt Burton





Keeping Harnett off balance in Atlanta

Unless we have a players' association, nothing will be done. The players have to be fined. Things like that have to happen to shape up the pro tour. We need that right now.

GERRY PRICE

Home: Castro Valley, CA

Age: 19

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 165 lbs.

Final 82-83 ranking: 8

Current PRO ranking: 10

Years Playing: 6

Sponsors: Ektelon, Nike

Racquet: Ektelon CBK - 145 grams

String Tension: 35/32 lbs.

"Most pros string around 30 lbs., but with a CBK you can get away with more because the strings are further apart."

Favorite Balls:

1 - Wilson

2 - Ektelon

3 - Voit

4 - Penn

Best Finishes:

1st - Jr. Nationals, USRA and AARA

1st - NOR-CAL Championships, 3 years

1st - Crack Shooters Open, Cheyenne, WY

Do you support the PRO?

Yes. I feel that it is a great organization. We need more time and people, and we need more player participation. But, the sport needs it badly. It will give me a chance to make decisions in racquetball, and I want to put as much as I can into the sport. I'm behind it all the way.

How do you feel about the future of professional racquetball?

Things can only get better. The sport has not been real good—it has not received much publicity lately. If we can get the players into the PRO, and make the decisions, and we make it more like a tennis or a golf association, it could be a super sport. But right now, it's not quite there. Racquetball is not a professionally run sport—it's between an amateur and professional sport.

There is a lot of discussion right now about racquetball on television, and about possibly slowing the game down. How do you feel about that?

Everybody has been talking about slowing down the game. It would be good to slow down the game, but if the money is put into it, we all know they can do anything with the cameras they want to. And if we can show them we have an organized sport, they will put the time and money into it and make it look great.

Racquetball is a great spectator sport. I've been playing a lot of years and I still enjoy watching the other pros play. It's a

great sport to watch, and if they film it right it could turn into something great.

Marty Hogan ended up losing the National Championship for the second year in a row this year. Do you think he's on his way out?

Marty has been on top of this sport so long that maybe he has become a little more civilized and not quite as hungry as he once was. Consequently he has not been dominating as much as he has in the past.

The level of competition is better now, but I feel he still has the ability to be number one. The only thing he doesn't have is the intensity he once had, probably because of his outside interests. Maybe he is a little burnt out.

As far as athletic skills go, I feel he can still dominate this game. I saw him play people this year where he had the match won and just gave it away. But he is still better than anyone else.

Some people think Bret Harnett will dominate the pros like Hogan did. Do you think that could happen?

No one will dominate this game like Hogan did. The level of play is too close together for that to happen again.

What about Gerry Price's future in professional racquetball?

I would like to say that this year I'm going to be number one in the world, but I really can't say that and feel good about it. I just want to go as far as I can. I think the way I am training that I can break into the top four this year.

Originally, I wanted to be in the top eight by this year and in the top four by next year. So far I have achieved my goals. The following year I want to be the top player in the world.

This next year, who are the players you have to watch out for the most?

Bret Harnett and Gregg Peck. As far as intensity and wanting to win, they are right on the same level as I am. They are a little bit older than I am, but not much. They are as hungry as I am to win—to get to that number one position.

Apparently you still have a lot of respect for the top four players.

A lot of respect—because they are the only players I feel I cannot beat consistently. I can beat any other player except the top four or five consistently. I know when I'm playing well I can even beat them, but I am not strong enough yet. I don't have that experience. But, I can get that.

«

THE THIRD PLACE

A Look At The Evolution Of The Court Club Industry Through the Eyes Of A Major Club Owner

by Bob Petersen

Editors Note: Few individuals can be as well qualified to speak about the racquetball court club industry and its relationship to the sport of racquetball as Bob Petersen, of Boise, Idaho. In 1976 Petersen began construction of what would eventually become a veritable monument among major court clubs in the United States—a massive 27-court facility on the west side of Boise known as The Court House. The club, which remains one of the largest private racquetball clubs in the world, boasts men's and women's Nautilus rooms, two free-weight rooms, two vast aerobics areas, an olympic-sized swimming pool, both outdoor and indoor whirlpools, basketball, wallyball, lounge, and a soon-to-be-completed restaurant. The crown jewel of the Court House is Court 27, considered by some the finest exhibition racquetball court in existence. Designed specifically for television, Court 27 has already been utilized in four national PBS telecasts of both men's and women's professional racquetball.

In 1980 Petersen and his partners built a second, 16-court version of The Court House in Billings, Montana.

He is considered by his peers to be a leader in his industry. As evidence of that fact, Petersen currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Racquet Sports Association (IRSA).

Bob Petersen's expertise goes well beyond just the court club industry. He is considered a pioneer in promoting and televising professional racquetball. He has staged numerous professional and



Bob Petersen

amateur events including the AARA National Singles Championships and two \$40,000 Boise-Cascade Charity Pro-Ams.

He is a highly accomplished racquetball player in his own right, and is one of the games most knowledgeable and respected coaches. He is a national seniors champion and is considered largely responsible for guiding professional player John Egerman to four national titles.

There is, perhaps, no other sport where the participants and the owners of the facilities at which they participate, are so closely tied as they are in racquetball. The sport is unique because in less than 20 years it has become one of the largest participant sports in the United States, spawning an entirely new industry that has been responsible for the construction and operation of over 20,000 courts nationwide. Unlike the average tennis player who has thousands of municipal courts at his disposal, virtually every person who plays racquetball in this country, does so at a privately owned racquetball club. It stands to reason, therefore, that no one can truly understand the sport of racquetball without first understanding the challenge and the direction of the court club owner.

Obviously, no industry experiences the type of explosive growth racquetball has seen without some pain. The racquetsports industry is only now emerging from what seems to have been a very serious shakeout period. But some within the sport seem to have the

"No one can truly understand racquetball without first understanding the challenge and direction of the court club owner."

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The Court House in Boise, Idaho

mistaken impression that things are much worse than they really are. There are even those who have accused the industry as a whole of abandoning the sport of racquetball to seek haven in the safety and numbers of the "fitness" boom. That accusation is unfair. What has actually taken place is a type of "metamorphosis"—the nature of the industry itself has changed. But, whatever racquetball players may think of the racquetsports industry, court club owners still have a greater vested interest in this sport than any other group.

"We all require some 'third place', away from either our home or work environment, where we can effectively relieve stress."

A recent televised women's Pro-Am from Court 27



The only way to really understand the racquetsport industry as it exists today is to explore how it has changed. There have really been three phases to its evolution. Back in the early 1970's, which were the earliest days of this industry, the types of clubs that were built were radically different from what we see now. Those who built then were real pioneers. They were willing to invest their dollars in an area no one understood. The clubs they built were "pure" racquetball clubs. They were essentially just courts—they had limited locker space, and few if any showers.

By the time most of us got started in this business—the late 1970's—we were already into the "second generation" clubs. We were able to take advantage of some of the mistakes that had been made by those who had gone before. Specifically, when we built the original phase of The Court House in Boise we constructed a 16-court facility with amenities; we had aerobic dance, a fitness room with universal weight equipment, a spa with co-ed whirlpools and sauna, large carpeted locker rooms, and we had a lounge. At that time we had already begun to recognize the need for the social aspect of the club; i.e., people were beginning to use the club to fulfill the social needs we all have to mix and meet other people.

In the early 1980's the industry went even one step further—we began to construct "full-service" racquetsport facilities. And the easiest way to describe full-service clubs is to compare them to the plush, full-service athletic clubs that have always existed in large metropolitan areas, but were limited primarily to the rich. The main difference is that now the clubs are available to everyone, and revolve around racquetball, or tennis, or both. Again, let me use the evolution of The Court House as an example; in 1978 we expanded to 27 courts, constructed a glass exhibition court with permanent seating for 300, and added a complete Nautilus room. In 1981, we converted one court to free-weights, added a ladies Nautilus room, and added basketball and wallyball. In 1982, we installed a Cado computer, added outdoor swimming and whirlpools, added a new dance area, and installed two tanning machines. This year we're adding another free-weight room, another Nautilus room, and a restaurant. We may expand into tennis next year.

Today, most clubs that are built are full-service clubs. The whole complexion of the court club industry has changed, not because club owners feel differently about the importance of racquetball, but because the needs of our members have changed. How did our members change? In my opinion the eco-

conomic circumstances of the last few years have changed us all.

When the recession hit us, and the general slowing of the economy became apparent to each of us, our spending habits changed. They had to—our dollars didn't go as far. Everyone still wanted to be fit, but not everyone was able to join a club to just play racquetball. Some were hit so hard they had to drop racquetball completely, and turned to running because it was cheaper. As club owners we had to give our people everything they needed to keep them as members; racquetball alone wasn't enough.

It appears that full-service clubs satisfy the needs of people very well. At The Court House we try to do that by creating what we call a "third place" atmosphere. Many psychologists are now talking about this third place concept, which says that because of the increased levels of stress we encounter in our modern lifestyle, we all require some "third place," away from either our home or work environment, where we can effectively relieve that stress. In many countries of the world the local "pub" becomes that third place. In this country the racquetclub has started to fill that role. It's where we go for relaxation. And, even better than the local pub, the club allows us to relieve stress in the two best ways—a vigorous physical workout followed by social interaction.

As happens in any business, some club owners didn't make it through the furious change of the last few years. The racquetsports industry suffered a severe "shakeout" that lasted from about 1978-1981, a period not unlike what is currently taking place in the computer industry. The market was not



Court House members ride the Lifecycles in one of the Nautilus rooms

able to support the supply, and so the weak and the inefficient were "shaken out." There were, in fact, a number of reasons clubs and clubowners didn't make it through that period.

First, there were many areas that were simply overbuilt. This became a serious problem, primarily in the major metropolitan areas, and the original "hotbeds" of racquetball. One example of overbuilding was a section of Detroit that at one time had four court clubs, with nearly 80 courts, within 2-3 miles of each other on the same street. In that situation, and in every similar one, it was inevitable that some would not survive.

Second, some clubs were badly mismanaged. Too many people saw the explosion coming and came into the industry thinking all they had to do was open the doors. But owning a court club

is like any other small business—good small businesses survive tough times and bad ones don't. Whether you're in the racquetsports business, or hardware, or automobiles, or whatever, that is a fact of life. As consumers, all of us are obsessed with value, and if we can't get it, we aren't going to pay.

Third, clubs failed because they had the wrong concept at the wrong time. Too many people didn't do their homework, and ended up trying to re-invent the wheel. One example of this was the concept of open-play, or per-hour court fee clubs, which were popular in the early days of the sport, but are now quite rare.

Fourth, our trade association was too new and too small to affect those who were getting into the business—there was nowhere to go for advice on how to proceed. Today, however, we have the International Racquet Sports Association (IRSA) for both tennis and racquetball club owners. It is made up of the leaders of the industry and is a dramatic improvement for club owners.

Finally, and this is an important point, many clubs got into trouble because they were undercapitalized, and that killed them when the economy turned. The key to surviving in this industry has been the ability to change when change is necessary. But if you aren't properly capitalized, you don't have the money to change and you're forced to ride it out however you can. Yes, it is true that, even had the economy remained strong, the racquetball industry was ready for a shakeout. But I have believed for some time that it wouldn't have been nearly as severe had the economy not gone sour at almost the moment the shakeout began. In fact, I believe it may have gone almost unnoticed within the sport had it taken place

Dance area is an important part of the Court House



Continued on page 42



PASSIN

WIDE-ANGLE PASSING SHOTS

(Editor's Note: Mike Yellen, recently won the 1983 National Championships by winning four tournaments in a row, sweeping the racquetball grand slam. He is a valued member of the Ektelon Pro Advisory Staff.)

by Mike Yellen

I am a firm believer in hitting passing shots and wearing my opponent down until his legs feel as though he is trudging through sludge. No one can survive the exercise he gets being on the wrong side of a good passing game and you can usually mop the guy up with a large sponge by the

time the tiebreaker rolls around.

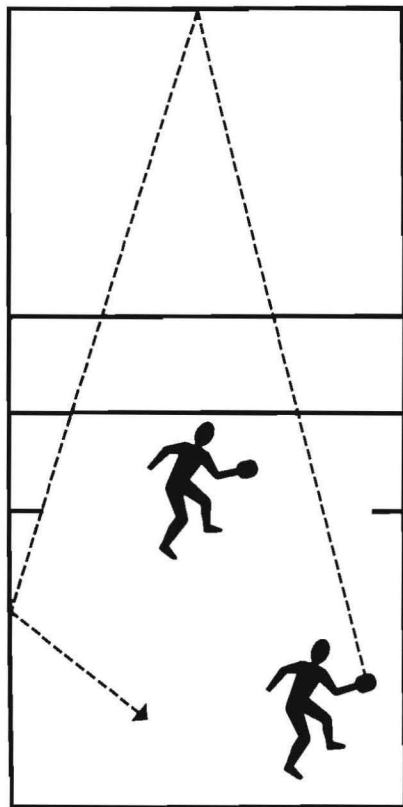
There are some players, though, who you just can't seem to get the ball past. These are guys who move around the court like they were shot from a gun or my Ektelon teammate Dave Peck who hovers over the floorboards like a low-flying Superman indiscriminately hit-

ting killshots.

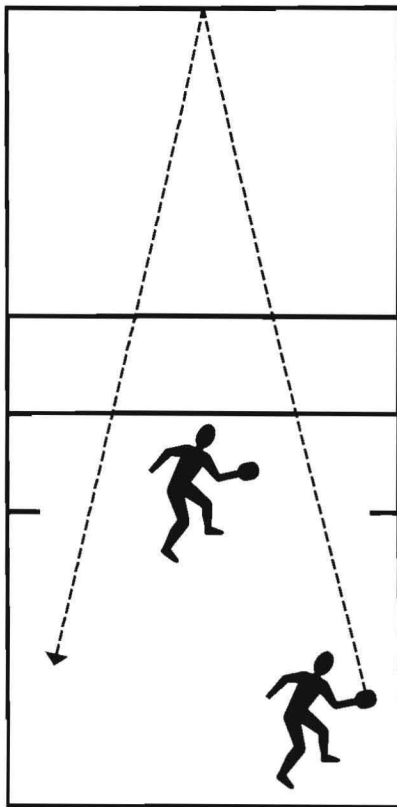
There are guys with rubber arms whose forearms will stretch an extra foot or so who seem to know where the ball is going before you hit it. They fall into the general category of "good retrievers" and, against these kinds of players, a normal passing shot may not work. But, I see no reason to change what is, basically, a good game strategy so what I usually do is simply switch to wide-angle passes.

A wide-angle pass is little more than a normal passing shot hit at a slightly wider angle. It puts a little extra distance between the ball and your oppo-

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Wide-angle pass



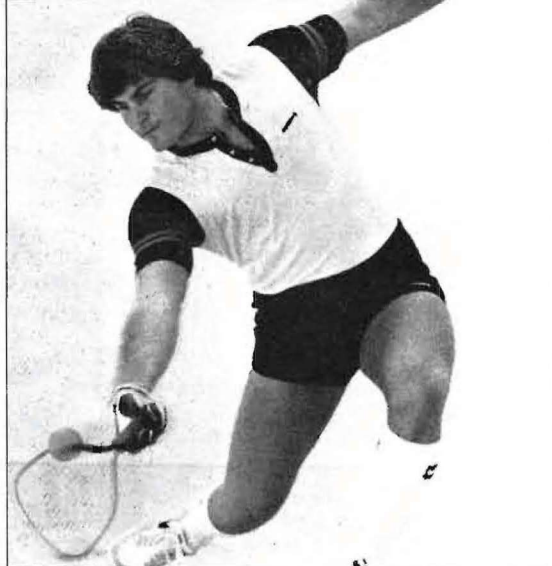
Regular-angle pass



G SHOTS

BACKHAND PASSING SHOTS

by Dave Peck



(Editor's Note: Dave Peck is currently ranked number three in the 1983 ratings. He is a valued member of the Ektelon Pro Advisory Staff.)

You've all heard this rather old racquetball adage. If you can control center court, you can control the game. Old it may be, but true it is, too. And one of the ways to control that center court is with the backhand pass.

Good passing shots in general—those that fly by your opponent on either side like a reckless rocket—are one of the game's most effective offensive weapons. A pass can be hit from any height, and velocity, and from anywhere on the court.

By going down the line with the backhand or cross court, you can take your opponent away from center court. You

can play "King of the Hill" and more often than not, come home with the crown.

The backhand pass usually arises out of a serious situation, by racquetball standards: a hard drive or soft lob deep to the backhand corner. Not too many players can kill out of that spot; and others, like myself, find it just too defensive to go to the ceiling. That leaves you with two alternatives: down-the-line pass or cross-court pass, either of which are effective because unlike a kill shot, with a backhand pass, there's no danger of skipping the ball into the floor on the way to the front wall.

And again, it's important to remember, good passing shots, whether hit on purpose or just a missed kill attempt, will determine solid center court play, the so-called center of this instructional.

To hit a good backhand pass, the angle of the body makes all the difference. To go down the line, the body is facing the side wall. Since I'm right handed, I face the left wall, my feet perpendicular to the side wall. That's the way you want to make contact—off the front foot, striding into the front wall, hitting up and down the left wall without the ball hitting the side.

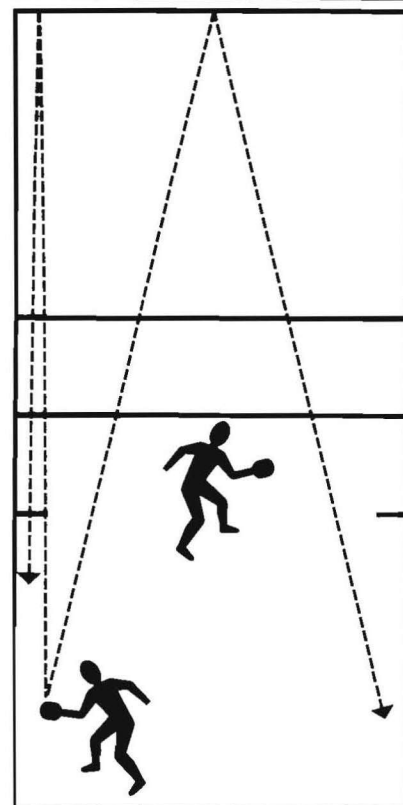
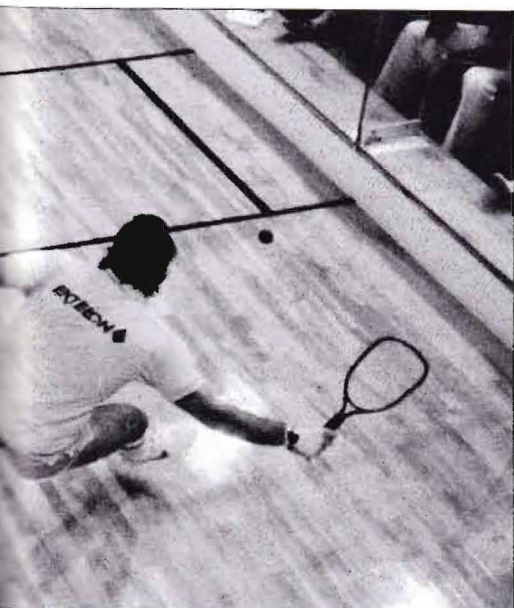
One thing to remember, actually two, is keep the ball down low (waist high or lower) so it doesn't rebound off the back wall and also, wait away. Hit the ball as hard as you can, careful to keep the first bounce near mid-court so the second comes before the back wall.

When going cross-court with the backhand pass, the right foot pulls back

so that tips of toes would point to the center of the front wall. The real objective is to drive the ball as hard as you can, deep into the right hand corner. Again, keep the ball low and watch the angle of your stroke.

There is one problem, however, with this shot: if you don't hit the angle just

Continued on page 40



Down-the-line and cross-court

Yellen from page 38

nent and, often, that is just enough to take it out of reach of one's rubber arms, one's speed or Peck's low-flying sorties.

A wide-angle pass can even fool a thinker because it is hit in exactly the same way as a regular pass, but the ball won't travel the same path. In fact, a wide-angle pass is particularly useful against a good control game player who will usually have a lock on the important center court position.

The second most important object of the passing game, you will remember, is to move your opponent out of center court and into back court where he can do less damage. The main object, of course, is to zing the ball past him and score the point on the shot. In both cases, the wide-angle pass can be a lifesaver. It is, however, slightly more difficult to hit than a normal pass. The normal pass or drive shot is aimed at one of the corners. It is either a down-the-line shot or a crosscourt shot hit off the backhand or forehand.

A wide-angle pass also can be hit off the backhand or forehand, but it is invariably a crosscourt shot. Instead of aiming for the corner, you are aiming for the side wall about the same distance as your opponent from the front wall.

A normal pass can be hit when your opponent is as far as three-quarters of the way back from the front wall. A wide-angle pass, though, should never be hit when your opponent is farther back than center court because the ball will be rebounding from the side wall and will come right at him if he is too far back.

The wide-angle pass should contact the front wall about three feet up, give or take a foot. It will bounce and then rebound to the side wall somewhat lower than that and even with your opponent. It will then come toward the middle of the court, but so far back and so low that your opponent will have little chance at the ball. It should be just about rolling by the time it comes off the side wall and may even crack out from the side wall floor seam. Even if the ball isn't that low, your opponent will still be trying to take the ball off the wall and we all know how much fun that is.

If he waits until the ball comes off the wall, he will be trying to hit a ball forward while moving toward the back wall, assuming that you have hit the side wall at the right spot.

A word about hitting the right spot on the side wall: no one is so accurate that he will be able to always place the ball even with his opponent. You can assume that you will make errors. Unfortunately, in this shot, the room for error is smaller than for many shots.

You don't want the ball to bounce off

the side wall in front of your opponent or it will be heading for the middle of the court just about where he would like to have it. It is much better to err in the direction of the back wall and let the ball contact the side wall a little behind your opponent.

Once again, you can't hit it too far behind him because, if it is very high at all, it will come off the back wall, once again giving him a shot. It also starts looking like a regular pass when angled that way and he may be able to move up and cut it off if the angle isn't wide enough. About two feet either way is all the room you have for error. Therefore, practice is important. You have to hit the ball by yourself or in practice matches until you are able to put it where you want it.

Start off a game hitting normal passing shots until your opponent figures out what you are doing and starts moving up to cut them off. Then put a wide-angle pass by him. Since you will be hitting passes only if you are even with or behind your opponent, you should have a pretty good perspective on his movement.

In and of itself, the wide-angle pass won't do you much good. If that is the only shot you are hitting in the pass situation, a good player will quickly pick up on that fact and be in position to scoop up every one.

The pinch shot, which rolls out from the front corners, is still a necessary complement to your passing game. If your opponent starts to hang back anticipating a pass, pinch the ball and send him scurrying toward the front wall. If he starts to move up to cut off the forecourt shot or a regular pass, go the wide-angle pass. Pretty soon, he will find himself running forward only to have to peddle backwards and then forwards again for the next shot.

In summary:

- Begin with a standard passing game, using pinches and kills as complementary shots and to keep your opponent guessing.
- If he catches on and starts to move up to where he can cut off your passes and reach your pinches, add wide-angle passes to your attack.
- If you are going to make a mistake with your wide-angle passes, have them contact the side wall a little behind, rather than in front of, your opponent.
- Keep your shots low on the front wall. Bend over as if you are going to hit a kill.

A wide-angle pass is not the easiest shot to execute, but there are times when nothing else will do. ❧

Peck from page 39

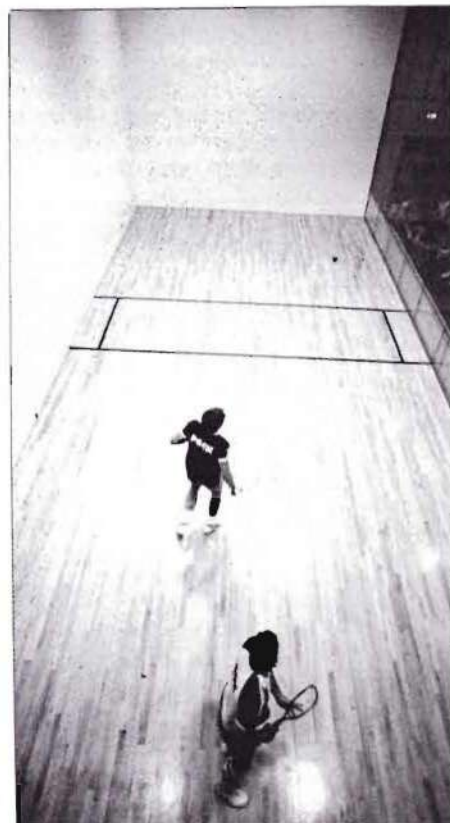
right, the ball will rebound off the back or side wall and flop into center court. And you know how much we were trying to avoid that disaster!

So do your geometry homework! If you want the ball to travel down the left line, go a couple of feet right of the left corner. If you hit just right of center, the ball will rebound off the right side wall into the back-court. And if you hit dead center, the ball will high-tail it to the back right corner—where it really belongs.

My Ektelon teammate, Mike Yellen, and I have had a few "conversations" over whether to use the cross backhand pass or not. Mike is dead set against it. "Pops out into the middle for a plum," he says. I say it can be terrific in some circumstances, especially when your opponent is backing up to his left in anticipation of your shot. Ripping it across court will catch them leaning the wrong way.

Either can, as mentioned, be effectively used as a service return and to keep your opponent off guard and out of the middle. But when you do gain center-court advantage, don't get caught trying passing shots from the front court—it's pretty easy to get trapped up there.

Whatever, analyze the situation and hit the ball where your opponent isn't. It makes for a very simple game. ❧



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*Based upon a 180-pound man carrying an extra 8% of his weight as fat (or 18% body fat).



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NOW-DON'T YOU WANT IT?

Third Place from page 37

at any other time.

So, having weathered the shakeout period, how healthy is the court club industry? It is much healthier than most seem to believe. There are many healthy clubs all over the country, some of them making terrific profits. And that is not restricted to any one region of the country. The industry is strong, and it is getting stronger. Our own situation in Boise seems to indicate that racquetball is experiencing another upswing. Although solid figures are always hard to come by, it appears that the number of racquetball players is again growing all over the country. We are even seeing new clubs under construction.

But whatever changes we have been forced to make to broaden the appeal of our facilities, racquetball club owners remain solidly committed to the sport of racquetball. For most of us, racquetball is the central, unifying, most important single function within our club. The quickest way for the racquetball/fitness club industry to grow, is for the sport itself to expand.

And that brings us to the importance of professional racquetball. Club owners realize that pro racquetball could help the industry dramatically if it became more visible—and that means television. Clearly, the best way for us to expose our product to the masses is on television. But we are never going to get there without a few changes.

In my own estimation, speaking as an owner, and as a promoter who has staged and televised a number of professional tournaments, we are going to have to slow down the ball and put the rally back into the game before we will ever get the game on television. And until we can get the game on television, the pro game is going to struggle. If I were advising the men pros right now, I would tell them that the single quickest way to improve the pro game is to *slow the ball down*. You have got to make the ball visible for the TV camers, and the rally understandable to novice and average players across the country.

As a group, racquet club owners are bullish on racquetball. Many of us got into this industry partially because we love the sport itself. And although it has been necessary for many of us to embrace a larger part of the fitness craze to remain healthy, change is an integral part of any solid industry. Perhaps the best way to characterize what has taken place in the sport over the last few years it to say that no one reaches maturity without suffering the turmoil of adolescence. From a personal standpoint, I thoroughly enjoy being a part of this industry. And I believe our sport is growing up.

Moving?



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In our December pages we will have a lot of diversity. You want professional tournament coverage? Well, how about the men's and women's pro tour stop in Vancouver, Canada? The pot will be a big one so watch for the big guns to come on smoking!



You want AARA action? How about the results of the exciting international competition in Costa Rica? We will also tell you about the AARA doubles tournament in St. Petersburg.

December will feature a special on top-of-the-line racquets. International Racquetball, with the help of especially selected pro/am players, will test and compare the best racquets on the market today. Should be very interesting!



But that's not all! There will be an interview with WPRA pro Vicki Panzeri, a special feature by pro Jerry Hilecher and a few surprises we'd like to keep under our hat! Don't miss December in International Racquetball!

MEN'S RACQUETBALL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS 1983-84 SEASON

DATE	LOCATION	PRIZE MONEY
OCT 19-23	EL CAJON, CA (Jim Ross 714-638-1661)	4,500
OCT 27-30	ST. PETERSBURG, FL	(AARA Doubles)
NOV 3-6	WOODLAND, CA	5,000
NOV 10-13	VANCOUVER, BC	15,000
NOV 10-13	FOUNTAIN VALLEY, CA (Jim Ross 714-638-1661)	4,500
NOV 17-20	AMARILLO, TX (Jay Lundgren 806-359-5438)	4,500
NOV (LATE)	TORONTO, ONTARIO	7,500
DEC 8-11	PLEASANTON, CA (Bill Dunn 415-651-1584)	15,000
JAN 12-16	FEDERAL WAY, WA	15,000
JAN 19-22	HONOLULU, HI	15,000
FEB 9-12	PALM DESERT, CA	9,000
FEB 16-20*	BEAVERTON, OR	15,000
FEB 20-24	GILLETTE, WY (Clint Koble 307-682-1437)	7,000
MAR 1-4	CHEYENNE, WY (Steve Galasinni 301-634-8884)	7,500
APR 5-8	AUSTIN, TX	6,000
MAY 2-6	ANAHEIM, CA	22,500
MAY 24-28	HOUSTON, TX	(AARA Nationals)
JUNE 1984	Undetermined DP Leach	40,000
JUNE 20-24	DAVISON, MI	(AARA Juniors)
JULY 16-22	SACRAMENTO, CA	(World Games)

WOMEN'S RACQUETBALL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS 1983-84 SEASON

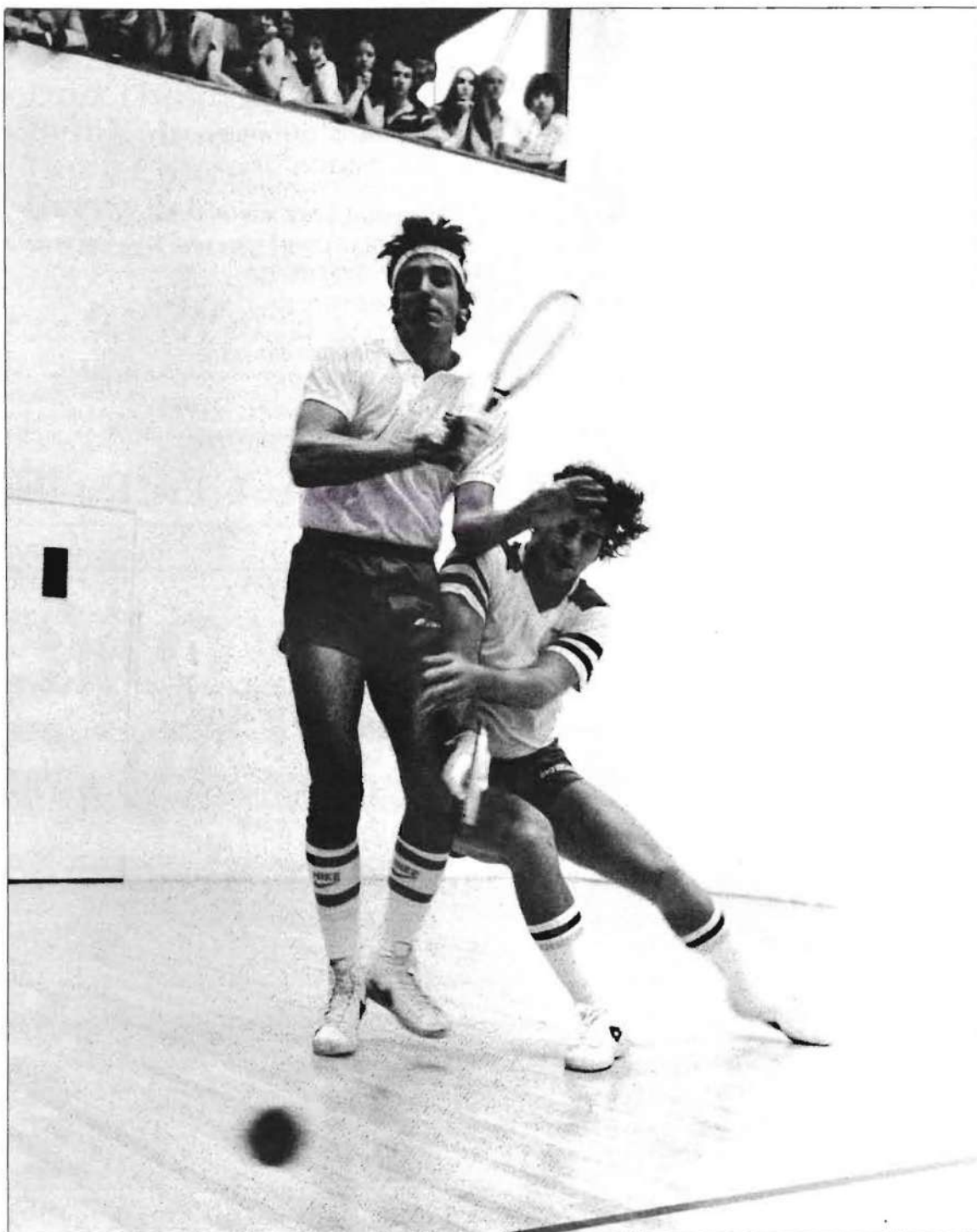
DATE	LOCATION	PRIZE MONEY
OCT 21-23	AUBURN, MA	6,000
NOV 10-13	VANCOUVER, BC	8,000
DEC 9-11	PLYMOUTH, MA	6,000
JAN 26-29	BEVERLY, MA	12,000
FEB 2-5	QUEBEC, CANADA	10,000
FEB 9-12*	PALM DESERT, CA	6,000
FEB TBA*	SEATTLE, WN	14,000
MAR 8-11	BANGOR, ME.	6,500
MAR TBA*	MIAMI, FL	15,000
APR TBA*	TORONTO, ONTARIO	6,000
MAY 2-6	ANAHEIM, CA	18,700
MAY 31-JUN 3*	FT WORTH, TX	20,000
JULY 12-15	ANCHORAGE, AK	6,000

*Tentative

For more information, contact:

AARA EVENTS	WOMEN'S EVENTS	MEN'S EVENTS
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303-635-5396	216-522-1200	801-531-1484

THE COURT JESTER



RACQUETBALL RULE #34 - HILECHER'S AXIOM

"A little judicious use of the body can make any pass, a good pass."

Head to Head Competition

Here are the head to head records of men's and women's professional racquetball for the 1982-83 season.

The women's chart was obtained from the official IMG tournament records. Those tournaments included were: Toronto, CBC, Vancouver, Lafayette, Atlanta, Quebec, Melbourne, Ft. Worth, Tucson, Bangor, San Francisco, Seattle, Anaheim, Chicago, and Atlanta.

The men's chart was tabulated by International Racquetball magazine from tournament records. Those tournaments included were: Stockton, Westminster, Burnsville, CBC, New Haven, Pleasanton, Hawaii, Palm Desert, Beaverton, Cheyenne, Austin, Toronto, Anaheim, Chicago, Atlanta, Davison, and Stockton.

Women's	H McKay	L Adams	S Wright	L Martino	V Panzeri	J Marriott	M Greer	T Gilreath	P Gardner	H Stupp	C McKinney	J Harding
HEATHER McKay		3-5	5-1	2-0	2-0	5-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	3-0
LYNN ADAMS	5-3		3-0	2-0	1-2	1-0	4-0	5-0	1-0	3-0	1-0	2-0
SHANNON WRIGHT	1-5	0-3		1-0	3-1	2-1		1-1	1-0		4-0	2-0
LAURA MARTINO	0-2	0-2	0-1		1-2		1-1	0-1	1-0	0-1	1-1	1-0
VICKI PANZERI	0-2	2-1	1-3	2-1			2-2				1-0	
JANELL MARRIOTT	0-5	0-1	1-2					1-1	2-0	1-0		1-0
MARCI GREER	0-2	0-4		1-1	0-1					1-1	1-0	
TERRI GILREATH	0-2	0-5	1-1	1-0	2-2	1-1			1-0	1-1	1-0	0-1
PEGGY GARDNER	0-2	0-1	0-1	0-1		1-2		0-1				
HEATHER STUPP	0-2	0-3		1-0			1-1					
CARYN MCKINNEY	0-2	0-1	0-4	1-1		0-1	0-1	0-1				2-0
JENNIFER HARDING	0-3	0-2	0-2	0-1	0-1	0-1		1-0			0-2	

Men's	M HOGAN	D PECK	M YELLEN	B HARNETT	G PECK	J HILECHER	G PRICE	E ANDREWS	D THOMAS	S LERNER	J EGERMAN	R WAGNER	S STRANDEMO	D COHEN	C McCOY	R GONZALEZ	S HAWKINS	M MARTINO	S OLIVER	L MYERS
MARTY HOGAN		3-1	2-4	3-1	2-0	3-0	1-0	2-0	4-0	2-0	2-0	1-1	1-0	1-0		1-0	1-0	2-0		
DAVE PECK	1-3		3-3	1-3	4-0			1-0	1-0	2-0	1-0	1-0		1-0	1-0			0-1		1-0
MIKE YELLEN	4-1	3-3		1-1	2-1	3-0	1-1	2-0			1-0	1-0		2-0	2-0	2-0			1-0	
BRET HARNETT	1-3	3-1	1-1		0-2		2-0	1-0				0-1	0-1	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0		
GREGG PECK	0-2	0-4	1-2	2-0		1-0	1-0	1-0			1-0	2-0		1-1	1-0	0-1				1-0
JERRY HILECHER	0-3		0-3		0-1		0-1	1-1		1-0		1-0		0-1		0-1	1-0		1-0	
GERRY PRICE	0-1		1-1	0-2	0-1	1-0			1-0		1-0	1-0		1-0	1-0	1-0		0-1		
ED ANDREWS	0-2	0-1	0-2	0-1	0-1	1-1			1-0	0-1	0-2			1-1	2-0				2-1	
DON THOMAS	0-4	0-1					0-1	0-1			1-1	0-1		1-0					0-1	
STEVE LERNER	0-2	0-2				0-1		1-0							1-0	0-1	1-0	1-0	2-0	
JOHN EGERMAN	0-2	0-1	0-1		0-1		0-1	2-0	1-1					0-1		0-1	1-0	0-1	0-1	
RICH WAGNER	1-1	0-1	0-1	1-0	0-2	0-1	0-1		1-0				1-0			1-1	1-0	1-0	0-1	
STEVE STRANDEMO	0-1			1-0								0-1		1-0		0-1				
DOUG COHEN	0-1	0-1	0-2	0-1	1-1	1-0	0-1	1-1	0-1		1-0		0-1							
CRAIG McCOY		0-1	0-2		0-1		0-1	0-2		0-1							1-0		1-0	
RUBEN GONZALES	0-1		0-2	0-1	1-0	1-0	0-1			1-0	1-0	1-1	1-0							1-0
SCOTT HAWKINS	0-1			0-1		0-1				0-1	0-1	0-1			0-1					0-1
MARK MARTINO	0-2	1-0		0-1		0-1	1-0			0-1	1-0	0-1			0-1					
SCOTT OLIVER			0-1			0-1		1-2	1-0	0-2	1-0	1-0								
LINDSAY MYERS		0-1			0-1											0-1	1-0			

HOW TO READ CHART: For any player the won/loss record against every other player is read horizontally opposite his name. The tournaments used are the same as those used for the IR Computer Rankings and are listed on page 46.

WOMEN'S RANKINGS

The rankings listed for the women are the official rankings of the Women's Professional Racquetball Association (WPRA). The upper listing shows the current rankings, and the lower listing shows the final rankings and earnings for the 1982-83 season.

The current rankings include the most recent WPRA stop in Atlanta, Georgia.

MEN'S RANKINGS

The men's rankings are derived using a temporary ranking system instituted by the Professional Racquetball Organization (PRO). This system will be used only until the PRO ranking committee, and the PRO general body adopt a permanent men's professional ranking system. That system is expected to be in effect by December 1983.

The temporary system used here is a modified extension of the 1983 Catalina ranking, but uses a 10-tournament rotating schedule. For each new ranking event that is added to the list, one event (the oldest event on the previous list) is dropped. Since the Davison tournament was the first event of the year, last year's first event (Westminster, CA) has been dropped from each player's record. Only the major ranking events of last season, and the newly sanctioned major events of this season are used on the 10-event list. This month the ten events used are:

- Burnsville, MN, 1982
- New Haven, CT, 1982
- Honolulu, HI, 1983
- Beaverton, OR, 1983
- Austin, TX, 1983
- Toronto, Ontario, 1983
- Anaheim, CA, 1983
- Chicago, IL, 1983
- Atlanta, GA, 1983
- Davison, MI, 1983

The listing here utilizes the same point system as the old Catalina system. Points per round per event are:

- Winner 120 points
- Second 90 points
- Semifinalist 70 points
- Quarterfinalist 50 points
- Round of 16 30 points

The total points accumulated by a player during the ten listed events are totaled and then divided by the number of events in which he participated. The largest possible divider is 10, and this month the minimum divider is 4.

It should be noted that the men have chosen this ranking system only as a temporary necessity, for the purpose of seeding the sanctioned events scheduled for the next 60 days. The permanent PRO system will be voted on and adopted by the players themselves and will likely be somewhat different than the method used here.

The lower section lists the final rankings and earnings for the 1982-83 season.

MEN'S PRO RANKINGS OCTOBER 19, 1983

THIS MO.	LAST MO.	PLAYER	POINTS
1	1	Mike Yellen	93.50
2	2	Marty Hogan	91.00
3	3	Dave Peck	75.00
4	4	Bret Harnett	59.00
5	5	Gregg Peck	56.00
6	8	Ruben Gonzalez	48.57
7T	7	Jerry Hilecher	43.33
7T	9	Don Thomas	43.33
9	11	Ed Andrews	35.56
10T	-	Jack Newman	35.00
10T	-	Gerry Price	35.00
12	10	John Egerman	30.00
13	-	Steve Lerner	28.00
14	12	Rich Wagner	26.25
15	14	Doug Cohen	26.00
16	15	Scott Hawkins	25.00
17	15	Craig McCoy	21.25
18T	-	Mike Levine	20.00
18T	-	Bill Sell	20.00
20T	-	Cory Brysman	15.00
20T	-	Scott Oliver	15.00
22T	-	Brian Hawkes	7.50
22T	-	Mark Martino	7.50
22T	-	Cliff Swain	7.50
22T	-	Lindsay Myers	7.50

WPRA RANKINGS OCTOBER 19, 1983

THIS MO.	LAST MO.	PLAYER	POINTS
1	2	Lynn Adams	281.97
2	1	Heather McKay	280.50
3	3	S. Wright Hamilton	196.88
4	4	Laura Martino	133.88
5	5	Vicki Panzeri	114.63
6	6	Terri Gilreath	103.75
7	8	Janell Marriott	78.57
8	7	Marci Greer	78.25
9	9	Peggy Gardner	62.50
10	11	Caryn McKinney	53.57
11	10	Jennifer Harding	50.38
12	13	Heather Stupp	49.67
13	12	Joyce Jackson	42.50
14	14	Stacey Fletcher	38.38
15	15	Brenda Poe Barrett	38.33
16	17	Bonnie Stoll	32.00
17	18	Diane Bullard	31.93
18	19	Francine Davis	31.63
19	20	Martha McDonald	25.63
20	16	Barbara Maltby	22.50
21	22	Carol Pranka	20.50
22	21	Gail Woods	20.00
23	25	Jean Sauser	19.33
24	23	Molly O'Brien	18.86
25	26	Leslie Clifford	16.33

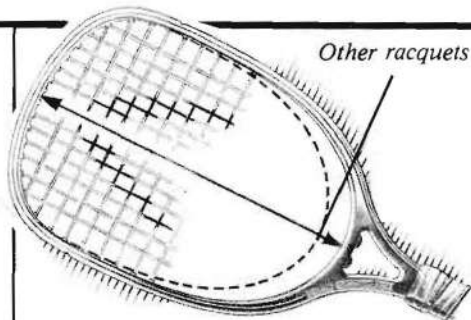
CATALINA FINAL 1982-83 RANKINGS

RANK	PLAYER	EARNINGS
1	Mike Yellen	\$57,750
2	Marty Hogan	38,200
3	Dave Peck	26,500
4	Bret Harnett	20,150
5	Gregg Peck	12,750
6	Steve Strandemo	3,250
7	Jerry Hilecher	11,350
8	Ruben Gonzalez	8,000
9	Don Thomas	7,650
10	John Egerman	5,250
11	Ed Andrews	5,900
12	Rich Wagner	5,050
13	Gerry Price	2,000
14	Doug Cohen	2,150
15T	Craig McCoy	2,000
15T	Scott Hawkins	—0—

WPRA FINAL 1982-83 RANKINGS

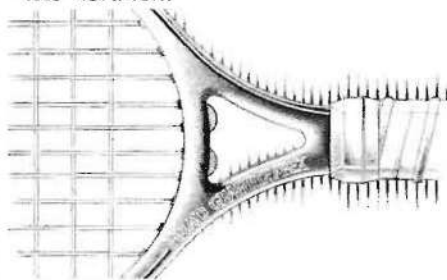
RANK	PLAYER	EARNINGS
1	Heather McKay	\$17,475
2	Lynn Adams	18,790
3	Shannon Wright	9,299
4	Laura Martino	8,253
5	Vicki Panzeri	6,895
6	Terri Gilreath	7,030
7	Marci Greer	6,896
8	Janell Marriott	4,314
9	Peggy Gardner	3,272
10	Jennifer Harding	5,148
11	Caryn McKinney	4,063
12	Joyce Jackson	2,372
13	Heather Stupp	1,705
14	Stacey Fletcher	2,090
15	Brenda Poe Barrett	1,764
16	Barbara Maltby	1,537
17	Bonnie Stoll	2,714
18	Diane Bullard	1,749
19	Fran Davis	1,688
20	Martha McDonald	1,364

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A larger hitting area emerged. A firmer frame. An aerodynamically slick profile. A lighter, more maneuverable racquet head. And a stiffness that racquets of the past just can't touch.

But these new designs were more than great ideas on the drawing board. In test-play, they delivered amazing new levels of power and control.

And now, Head brings that stunning performance to *your* game with the new Vector and Graphite Apex racquets.

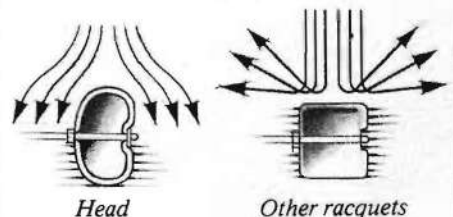
Never has there been such a clear advantage available to the serious racquetball player. So visit your Authorized Head Dealer soon.

Because you see, we must make them available to your competition as well.



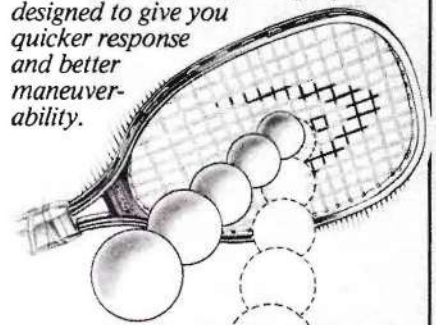
We want you to win.

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QUICKER

Our aerodynamically slick profile is designed to give you quicker response and better maneuverability.



STIFFER

With a stiffer frame, more power is transferred to the ball instead of absorbed by the racquet. It also helps the ball follow a truer, more accurate path as it rebounds off the racquet face.

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The Head Graphite Apex —the ultimate performance racquet.

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Graphite 8000™



The Graphite 8000 is constructed of 80% graphite and 20% fiberglass. Our innovative new core design features a cork-filled frame which eliminates air pockets and ensures smooth string holes. The contour-molded bumper guard gives longer

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The Graphite 8000 gives you every advantage.

DP LEACH
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