

Racquetball Reporter

July 2003

Volume XIII, Issue 2

FLOYD AND SAAD WIN OPEN TITLES AT STATES IN 2003



Jim Floyd, 2003
Mens Open Champion

March 28-30, 2003 was the date and The Players Club in Warren was the site as Michigan crowned its racquetball champions for the 2002-03 year. Competition was fierce as over 150 players competed in 39 different divisions. The competition was so tough this year that there were only two players winning two championships. Jack White, of Warren, was victorious in both the Mens 40 defeating Jeff Connell and in the Mens 45 defeating Tom Blakeslee. Paula Saad accomplished this feat on the womens side defeating Laura Patterson in the Womens Open and state board member Felecia Mann in Womens 35A. Congratulations to both Paula and Jack.

This year's tournament also saw the return of numerous junior divisions and it is great to see the younger players back in competition. In the 18 and Under, Alex Brown defeated Mark Chester to take the title. In the 16 and Under, Mark Chester came roaring back to the title defeating Nic Minto. In the 14 and Under, Michael Krieger defeated Nick Tloczynski and in the 12 and Under, Andrew Price defeated Kevin Clark. The Chester family claimed more bragging rights as Trent Chester finished in 2nd place in the 10 and Under division, losing only to Dan Poindexter. These divisions featured some of the most exciting matches of the weekend and congratulations to all of the junior players who participated.

In the two high profile divisions, both saw repeat winners from earlier year's State Single tournaments. In the Mens Open, old time racquetball enthusiasts will remember the Jimmy Floyd vs. Joel Bonnett battles of the past. With both players a little older and a little wiser, the quality of the racquetball continued to be exceptional. Jim Floyd defeated Joel Bonnett for the 2003 crown and bragging rights for the next year. Semifinalists in the Mens Open were Brandon Cortese and Jeff Mullins.

The Womens Open saw another rivalry continue as past Open Champion, Paula Saad defeated Laura Patterson, to claim the top spot in Michigan Women's Racquetball for 2003. Semifinalists in the Womens Open were Felicia Mann (who also finished second in the Womens 35), and perennial powerhouse Melody Gorno.

Sponsors of this year's event included Penn Athletic Products, who has continued to sponsor the State Singles and State Doubles Championships yearly in Michigan, and Anderson's who yearly provides a high quality award for the state champions in each division. RAM would also like to thank the staff at The Players Club for the great hospitality and for providing all players with a quality weekend.

Results from the State Singles Championship can be found on page 11 of the newsletter or can be found on the web site at www.michiganracquetball.org. Please congratulate all state singles champions when you see them this summer and check the winners list for the second place and the semi-finalists to see who you need to watch for next fall.



Paula Saad, 2003
Womens Open Champion

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A View from the President

- Tom Blakeslee

We just had RAM officer elections for the upcoming 2003-2004 tournament year. Felicia Mann will be the new president. I think she will do a good job. As a result, this is my last View of the President newsletter article. I have been President or Vice President for around 18 years and have written over 80 of these newsletter articles. Many of you have commented over the years about some things I have written and two of my favorites are what I would like to share with you.

My first memory was 20 years ago writing about Bob Wilhelm and the desire to work, train and practice as a 34 year old to compete at a high level with a chance someday to play Bob. Imagine 20 years later I am still kicking and screaming playing racquetball but I can't play Bob because he quit.

The second article that I remember of importance was the one I wrote was on the beach of Waikiki, looking at diamond head in the fall of the year. What a place to write! No I am not quitting the RAM board, 20 years of my personal dedication, hard work, sweat and blood is involved. I will be around on the board with the right to vote. I feel like Rick Carlisle, the former coach of the Pistons.

By performance measures the RAM (Racquetball Association of Michigan) is better than ever! Membership is up when nationwide it is down. We now have a strong junior program, almost 50 junior RAM members. We have a new website and webmaster; a new newsletter editor; new board members and some about to join the board; more tournaments than last year and this year's state tournaments were bigger than ever. Racquetball in Michigan is good.

So like Carlisle, hopefully Larry Brown will do a better job, and hopefully Felicia will do a better job. Please support her. Lastly I would like to thank all you for your support over the years! Like always, see you on the hardwood!

Tom

Letter from the Prez . . .

- Felicia Mann

First, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Tom Blakeslee for serving as the RAM President for more than a decade and a half. On behalf of the members of RAM, we thank Tom for leading so dutifully for all of those years and look forward to his continued leadership and wisdom on the Board.

Now, I would like to share with you my vision for racquetball in Michigan. I know that I am a little biased toward racquetball, but I believe it to be one of the best all around LIFESTYLE activities known to man. What other sport allows you to get an enormous aerobic workout (beat only by running like a manic for an hour), hit something as hard as you can AND make/keep friends while you do it? If you know me at all, you know that I am a "grass roots" person and therefore a "grass roots" racquetball player and I try to keep things simple. In that mindset, I envision the following:

1. RAM sponsoring not only the State Doubles and State Singles, but also sponsoring a Women's only tournament, a Junior's tournament, a Men's "B, C, D (novice)" tournament and maybe even picking up a Senior's/Master's tournament.
2. Can someone say Pro Stop?
3. That we have more developed committees to spearhead our special interest groups (i.e. Juniors, Women, Novice players, etc.)
4. That our activities include more player involvement (players actually starting racquetball leagues at their clubs, promoting clinics, etc.)
5. More sponsors (not only in dollars, but sponsors who show support with time and energy).
6. More timely dissemination of racquetball info (who's doing what when)

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RAM Board of Directors

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Webmaster
Randy Pagels

Sanctioning Committee
Tom Blakeslee

Junior's Committee
Sharon Huczek

Newsletter
The Racquetball Reporter
321 Village Dr.
Lansing, MI 48911

Calendar

Jim Easterling is in the process of trying to put together a racquetball calendar for 2004. This calendar will have black and white pictures of Michigan players featured for each month.

If you plan to hold a sanctioned tournament between now and December 31, 2004, please contact Jim with your date and site of the tournament, so it can be featured in the calendar. Please do so by **August 6, 2003**.

You can email Jim at ---
djeasterling@earthlink.net with the name of your tournament, club, city, date and contact name and phone number. Questions, call 517-887-0459.

MICHIGAN CROWNS TWO NATIONAL CHAMPIONS IN MAY

- Twayne Howard

Each Memorial Day weekend, hundreds of racquetball players from across the United States descend upon Houston seeking the title "National Champion". In the end, only a few can claim this title. To do so a player must have: preparation and training; mental, physical and emotional toughness; good health, good diet and good rest; a good draw, a good bounce, good equipment, some good luck and innumerable other factors. This year, Team Michigan's 14 members had plenty going for them because they won a combined 13 medals including two National Championships.

By now we have all become familiar with the headline "Huczek Claims National Title". Usually it refers to Jack Huczek. Often overlooked, however, are the accomplishments of **Sharon Huczek**, a multiple-national-champion in her own right. This year Sharon fought her way through the Women's 50-60+A/B Division. Any division at Nationals is tough, but when it is a round robin division, the difficulty is multiplied. Any match can end your title hopes. Sharon's toughest match was her final match. She faced perennial medallist Susan Kieffer and lost the first game 15-0. Incredibly, this Champion regrouped to take the second game 15-7, and then won the tiebreaker 11-8 giving her the National Championship.

Twayne Howard has bounced in and out of the B and C divisions since an ACL injury sidelined him in 1999. Another late-season injury dropped him into the 25+C/D and 30+C/D Divisions for Houston. Twayne came into Championship Sunday undefeated facing the last two rounds of the round robin 25+C/D and the finals of 30+C/D. Three matches on one day are unusual to say the least and are no cakewalk. After losing the first game of the first match, he rallied to beat his opponent in a tiebreaker setting up two Finals. The second match of the day was the 30+C/D Final. Twayne ran into a very tough competitor and had to settle for Silver. The last match of the day paired Twayne against Mike Easthope, a rematch of Cleveland Regionals. This time the stakes were higher with Gold

going to the winner. Unfortunately, Mike had strained his bad knee earlier, and had very limited mobility. Mike fought like a wounded lion, making great shots out of desperation. In the end, the injury proved too much as Twayne won in two games to win the National Championship.

Congratulations to our National Champions.

Mike Easthope was the only other double-medallist from Team Michigan. Mike also entered Championship Sunday undefeated facing the last two rounds of the 25+C/D and the Semi-Finals of the 45+C/D. His first match went to a close tiebreaker where a tough opponent and several bad calls cost Mike the match. It was during this match that Mike twisted his knee, an injury that would plague him throughout the day. His opponent in the 45+C/D Semi was very tough, and sent Mike into the Third/Fourth match which he would be forced to forfeit on Monday. This set up the last match in the 25+C/D against Twayne detailed above. Tournament tie-breaker rules assured that Mike's two losses would not deny him a Silver Medal. A well deserved finish as he fought his heart out

Another former Champion, Diana Courtney fought her way to the Finals of the Women's B Division, including surviving an 11-10 tiebreaker in the quarterfinals. The Final pitted the top two seeds, as #2 Chandra Shaw came out on fire to take the first game 15-2. Diana fought back to win the second 15-11, but couldn't hold the momentum losing the tiebreaker 11-2. Another successful trip to Houston for Diana as she left with a Silver medal for her efforts.

Although the second seed in the Men's Open Division, Jack Huczek was favored by most to win. Pressed more than usual in the earlier rounds, he was never really threatened going into the finals against Rocky Carson. These two have met many times over the years in hard-fought, close matches and this time was no different. Jack played near-perfect racquetball to win the first game 15-6. Rocky clearly decided to go for broke in the second and his aggressive play

forced uncharacteristic errors. Jack fought back to 13-12 before two cut-photon serves closed out the second 15-12. Jack stormed out to a huge lead in the tiebreaker 8-3. For the second day in a row, Rocky played his way back into the game, and pulled out an 11-10 win, forcing Jack to settle for the Silver. This loss will add motivation for Jack going into this Summer's Pan Am Games where he will serve as the IRT representative to the US Team.

Michigan's newest Hall of Fame inductee, Duane Russell took to the courts in the round robin Men's 75+ Division. This division always provides enjoyable racquetball as these gentlemen exhibit great camaraderie, skill, and perseverance to play the game they love. In the end, Mr. Russell earned the Silver medal, falling only to the "New Kid", 75-year-old Joe Lambert in a tight 15-13, 15-12 match.

Chuck Van Hoose, everyone's favorite curmudgeonly Grandpa bounced back from an 11-10 tiebreaker loss in the quarterfinals of the 55+C/D Division to storm into the Finals of the 50+C/D Division. In the Finals Chuck watched as his opponent seemed to turn into an open player for stretches as he got past Chuck, 15-10, 15-6. Unfortunately, Chuck will have to wait for next year. I'm sure the Silver will add additional motivation.

Jack White returned to Houston hoping to duplicate his last trip where he won two Gold Medals. Unfortunately, he was coming in with a badly strained calf and an injured toe thanks to a fight with some coral (yeah, but you should see the coral) resulting in no court time in over a month. After dropping out of the 45+ Open to concentrate on the 45+A/B, Jack survived several tough matches to make it to the Finals. When he got there, he hit an opponent who was both good and lucky which is always a deadly combination. Jack's opponent came up with over a dozen one-footed, off-balance, swing-and-a-prayer rollouts closing out the match in incredible fashion. Although terribly disappointed, Jack will look back, remem-

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MICHIGAN RACQUETBALL HALL OF FAME CELEBRATION

- Lynn Hahn

On March 29, 2003, the Racquetball Association of Michigan and the Michigan Racquetball Hall of Fame hosted a banquet to honor the inductees for the last three years as well as to celebrate 25 years of organized racquetball in Michigan. The event was held in conjunction with the 2003 State Singles Championships, at the Georgian Inn in Roseville. Jim Easterling, the Hall of Fame Committee chair, hosted the event attended by 13 former Hall of Fame inductees, RAM members and guests. As Jim Easterling explained at the banquet, "no place, in one setting, has there been gathered so many persons responsible for the 25 years of Michigan racquetball."

Jim welcomed the attendees to the banquet on behalf of the Hall of Fame Committee. Tom Blakeslee then welcomed the attendees on behalf of the Racquetball Association of Michigan. Ron Pudduck, a 2000 inductee and the current NMRA president, then spoke. He honored Jim and Dianne Easterling for their work in organizing the banquet and then honored Denny Wood, a 1988 inductee into the Hall of Fame. He recognized Denny as being a leader in the development and implementation of Michigan Racquetball.

Mike Yellen, who in 1987 won the National Professional Racquetball championship for the 5th consecutive year and in year 2000 was inducted into the Michigan Racquetball Hall of Fame, then spoke to honor Jim Hiser. Jim has a tremendous resume of accomplishments in organizing tournaments and has been on Boards for the AARA and other racquetball organizations. Jim started the Hall of Fame and the display was located at the Davison Racquet Club from 1984-1993. Jim is currently the Executive Director of the United States Racquetball Association.

The highlight of the evening was the induction of the two newest members into the Hall of Fame and the honoring those who were inducted in 2001 and 2002. Those inducted, and the year they were inducted is as follows:

J. D. Driver, 2001
Lou Ellen Fecher, 2002
Randy Minto, 2002
Dianne Easterling, 2003
Duane Russell, 2003

At the banquet each inductee above was presented by a former Hall of Fame member to explain their accomplishments in racquetball.

J. D. Driver began playing racquetball around 1980 at the current Omni Fitness Club in Muskegon. He was at that time about 53 years of age. With his Karate experience he was very agile and strong, which helped him develop into a fine player and shortly he was winning tournaments. He won his first State Championship in 1990 and since then he continued by winning Regional tournaments and in 1996 won the U.S. Open championship in the 65+ age bracket. J. D. continues to play as well as teach younger players. He is married to Dolly, an avid supporter. Lynn Hahn, who was inducted in 1984, introduced J. D.

Lou Ellen Fecher began playing racquetball at the Davison Racquet Club in 1981 and shortly was playing in State Doubles, Singles and Regional tournaments at Level A. In the period of 1986 to 1989 she began working for Jim Hiser's Super 7 Series, Davison Pro Shop and the World Professional Racquetball Tour. In 1988 she became a member of the RAM Board serving in several positions including Secretary, Treasurer, and State Doubles/ Singles Tournament Director. After Jim Hiser left Davison she ran the Super 7 Series for a couple of years. She will be remembered for her dependability and leadership. Bob Wilhelm, a 1987 inductee, introduced Lou Ellen.

Randall Minto has a varied resume in racquetball. He has been playing racquetball for about 24 years attaining A level status and he says he still loves to play, bad back and all. Since 1978, he has organized and supervised a large variety of league formats, run tournaments, and taught the game as a Certified Professional Instructor. He hosted and assisted running the longest running pro stop in the U.S. He helped produce many of the nations top players and has hosted several National caliber exhibitions fea-

turing top professional players. To top it off he broke the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest consecutive time for playing racquetball at 102 hours, 13 minutes and 42 seconds, which raised over \$3,000 for Muscular Dystrophy. Dr. Fred Lewerenz, who was inducted in 1984, introduced Randall.

Dianne Easterling began playing racquetball in 1978 at the Oak Park Athletic Club in Lansing and eventually played in Woman's B and A level tournaments. She also assisted in the league programs and ran local tournaments. In 1981 she was elected to the MRA Board as treasurer. She became involved in most of the details of having an effective state organization like running the state ranking system, developed and published a Court Club guide, designed tournament entry forms, worked on draws, and handled securing of sponsorships for all MRA tournaments. In 1983 she received the MRA Contribution Award. She created MRA membership cards for all members. Her work in 1984 was instrumental in the merger MRA and MARA to become RAM in July that led to RAM becoming an affiliate of AARA. She was tournament director in many State Singles and Doubles and in 1987 she received the RAM Contribution Award. Currently she is a co-tournament director of the Senior/Masters tournaments. J.D. Driver introduced Dianne.

Duane Russell began playing in 1976 at the Lansing YMCA at age 50. Since that time he has progressed steadily into one of the top players in his age brackets. In the state, he was the 1992 champion in the 65+ bracket. He has numerous National Championships in both singles and doubles. In July-August 2002 Duane was ranked No. 1 in the National Rankings in the 75+ age bracket. Duane also served on the Board as secretary from 1986-1993. Richard Caretti, who was inducted in year 2000, introduced Duane.

Jim Easterling took the occasion to thank the following people for their support of the Michigan Racquetball Hall of Fame. **Mike Anderson** for his developing the plaques for the Hall of

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TEN THINGS I WOULD CHANGE ABOUT OUR GAME . . .

- James Woolcock

1. Go to the one-serve rule for amateurs.

This is already the case in pro racquetball and, years ago, Jim Hiser tried it in a Super 7 tournament in Grand Blanc. We have a 20X20 area in which to land the ball, virtually all of the floor area in the court as a whole. C'mon, most of my beginners can learn to get first serves "in" after 2 lessons. This will force serve-creativity and bring back "working the point" into a player's mindset.

2. Restrict entering "two" singles divisions in tournaments.

At one time, there were fewer singles divisions. Now, there is every possible permutation of "singles division". For the novice and C players, who are aging, it's confusing. For the better players, they all end up playing each other in these varying divisions anyway. At one time, there were few singles divisions. Players opted to play doubles as their second division. Doubles is excellent for skill development. The doubles divisions also promoted a greater camaraderie, something we still see in the State Doubles competition.

3. Except at *State, Regional, and National* tournaments, use 10 year age brackets, instead of 5 year brackets.

Ohio was doing this more routinely in their events. It will make for larger draws, more interesting matchups, and a greater variety in opponents. This may help resolve issues related to my second suggested change above.

4. Reduce the number of timeouts to 2 for the 15 point games, and 1 for the 11 point game.

I've been as liberal of a user of timeouts as most players I know, and have rarely used 3 in a 15-point game, even when I've gotten smoked by someone. Again, Jim Hiser invoked this during the Super 7 years ago. Nice innovation. Let's do it all the time.

5. Fix the "encroachment" rule.

I don't know if it is the rule, the difficulty in interpretation, or simply the difficulty in actually calling it. I do know that it has been a great source of disagreement among players. If we go to the one-serve rule, this will get even uglier. If we can't fix the rule, how about moving the "safety line" back one-foot.

6. Re-emphasize rules related to "playing without a referee" at all levels of the game.

This used to be a section in the USRA Rule Book distributed every year. I haven't seen it in years. There is nothing more satisfying than two players who, when in doubt, make a call against themselves. When they disagree, play it again. If both do that, it is infinitely very fair.

We worked hard to teach this to our kids in junior racquetball. This "ethic" forms the foundation of everything that is good about the game of golf. Let's get it into our game.

7. Get back to enforcing real punctuality for tournament matches.

This varies greatly by tournament director. There is nothing more irritating than having to tolerate tardiness from an opponent, while you knocked yourself out to get to the match and "ready" to be called to play 30 minutes in advance of

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BANQUET VCR TAPE FOR SALE

If you were there, or if you were not, here is your chance to see the induction ceremony for the Michigan Racquetball Hall of Fame.

I am referring to the RAM 25th Anniversary/Hall of Fame banquet held on March 29, 2003. The Hall of Fame Committee has a VCR tape for sale for \$12.00 showing the highlights of the evening. The video lasts about 1 hour and 15 minutes. The copies for sale are from the video made by John Huczek. The quality of the VCR tape is "OK" and includes speeches made by the Hall of Famers and the people who introduced them. The VCR tape pans around the room showing some of the people who were there that evening and all of the Hall of Famers in attendance (13) getting their group picture taken. A few of the people you get to see and hear are: Bob Wilhelm, Lynn Hahn, Ron Pudduck, Lou Ellen Fecher, Randy Minto, and Mike Yellen. This VCR tape has a lot of Michigan racquetball history on it and you "true blue" racquetball players will want this one in your collection.

All proceeds go to the Michigan Racquetball Hall of Fame. To order please fill out the form below. If you have any questions please call Jim Easterling at (517) 887-0459 home.

RAM 25th ANNIVERSARY/HALL OF FAME BANQUET VCR TAPE

The cost is \$12.00 (this includes postage) each. Please make out checks to "**RAM Hall of Fame**" and mail to: Hall of Fame, 321 Village Drive, Lansing, MI 48911-3760

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Please send me _____ VCR tapes for \$12.00 each
which totals to: \$ _____

Letter from the Prez...

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7. Finally, I dream of a world where everyone who is able to walk is playing racquetball on the ever so plentiful free courts that are available throughout our beautiful state (okay, so I got a little soppy!!)

For any of this to be a reality, however, **YOU**, the Michigan racquetball player has to get involved. If you are not serving on the Board, come to a meeting and join a committee (next meeting is September 11, 2003 at the Franklin Racquet and Fitness Club in Southfield at 6:30 pm). If you are not already playing on a league, join one or better yet, start one. If your co-worker at work is getting on your nerves, invite them to play racquetball with you and relieve a little stress -- I'll bet the both of you will be better for it. If your spouse is picking up a little weight and he/she is always complaining about it, take them out to hit the blue ball -- the family that plays together, stays together. If racquetball has been good to you and for you NOW is the time to be good to and for racquetball.

The Board will do its part in keeping things moving forward by implementing the following (and this is just a beginning):

1. Committees are already forming for Juniors (Karen Green and Lewis Forrest), and Women (Stephanie Cobb). We still need volunteers for Men's B/C/ Novice.
2. Starting with the State Doubles application, we will request your e-mail address. When special events are scheduled (be it leagues forming or special clinics), we will be in a position to send you an announcement offering timely information.
3. As always, we offer our web site (michiganracquetball.org) to tournament and league

First Troy Juniors Only Tournament

- Lewis Forrest



On May 3, 2003, the first junior's only tournament was held at Troy LifeTime Fitness Center. There were a total of 34 players and six divisions. Lewis Forrest, a pro certified instructor and representative for Wilson Racquet Sports initiated and created the groundwork for this successful event. The tournament would not have been a success without the help of Felicia Mann, Karen Green, Tom

Blakeslee and Samantha Lenz (LifeTime Activities Director), and her assistant. A special thanks to Tom Blakeslee for the Ektelon Racquet he donated. The Racquetball Association of Michigan has planned for a minimum of two Junior Only Racquetball tournaments for the 2003/2004 season. (Watch for dates in the upcoming newsletters.)

2003-04 RAM TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

(tentative)

Aug 30-Sept 1	Omni Athletic Club Muskegon (tentative)	Nov 7-9	Detroit Amateur Athletic Club
Sept 19-21	Bronson Athletic Club Kalamazoo		Franklin Athletic Club Southfield
Sept 27-28	Riverview Fall Brawl Riverview Athletic Club Grand Rapids	Nov 14-16	Michigan Athletic Club Lansing
Sept 27	One Day Juniors Tourney Players Athletic Club Warren	Dec 5-7	State Doubles club TBA
Oct 17-19	West Michigan Open Michigan Athletic Club Grand Rapids	Jan 9-11	Pen Club Challenge Cup Peninsular Club Grand Rapids
Oct 26	Halloween Spooktacular Players Athletic Club Warren	Jan 23-25	Motor City Rollout Courtland Athletic Club Utica (tentative)
coordinators to post entry forms and results.		Feb 6-8	Game Face Open Total Sports Mt. Clemons
		Feb 20-22	Michigan Athletic Club Lansing
I am excited about serving as president and look forward to being a part of the progression that I know is inevitable for racquetball here in Michigan. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me at president@michiganracquetball.org or call me at home (313)567-5225.		Mar 6	March Madness Players Athletic Club Warren
		Mar 12-14	MAC Open Grand Rapids
		Mar 26-28	State Singles Players Athletic Club Warren

Inaugural Peninsular Club Challenge Cup Debuts in High Style

- Twayne M. Howard

The intimate and opulent surroundings of the Peninsular Club in downtown Grand Rapids helped kick off the new year in high fashion. Over fifty players squeezed into the three-court facility for two days of great racquetball and even better hospitality. Ray McCahill, Martha Dawson, Rob Spencer and the rest of the Pen Club staff rolled out the red carpet and the players were more than appreciative.

Off-court highlights included excellent meals prepared by the Peninsular Club, dozens of door prizes and cash awards for the Men's Open Division and two randomly drawn mystery divisions. Gold Sponsors for the tournament were Preusser Jewelers sponsoring Court A, AT&T Media Services sponsoring Court B, Dr. Warner DeLeeuw of American Chiropractic Center sponsoring Court C, The Grand Rapids Rowing Association sponsoring the Men's Open Division, as well as Perrigo Printing and ProKennex Racquetball. Silver sponsors were Marge's Donut Den and Fifth Third Bank. Mystery Division Sponsors were the Pen Club 6:15am Spinning Class, and PPKW Racquetball. Bronze Sponsors were Bar Divani wine bar, Flanagan's Pub, and Sole Healing Reflexology.

On court, play befitted the setting. The Women's Open/A Division was played in round-robin fashion with Vallana Perrault taking the Championship over Ruth Beier and Marjorie Pendell.

The Men's 40+C/D Division was one of the Mystery Cash divisions earning the champion \$50 plus the trophy. In the end, Barry Dennis was the winner, closing out Neal Young in the Finals. Dean Cline and Jeff Young were the semi-finalists.

The other Mystery Cash division was the Men's 25+C/D Division. This was one of the best finals of the day as Bob Shurlow outlasted Dan Mullin. These two are regular finalists, always putting

on a good show. Bob took home an extra \$50 for his work. The semi finalists were Joshua Thomas and Richard Newsome.

The Men's 40+A/B Division exhibited great play throughout, as nearly every match was close. Lansing's Ron Glosser took home the title with a 15-13, 15-13 victory over Dennis Howell. Robert Schermer Sr. and Chris Pendell were the semi finalists.

Although he couldn't advance in his primary division, George Goudie dropped down a "few" years to take the Men's 25+A/B Division, defeating Mike Sobczyk in the Finals. Randy Pagels and Kevin "Stu" O'Keefe were the semi finalists.

Charles White dominated the Men's 25+ Open Division in commanding fashion. Paul Stanwick and Craig Dennings rounded out the round-robin division.

The Men's C finals featured another familiar pairing. Crafty lefty Barry Dennis took it to Bob Shurlow in the Finals to take home his second Championship of the weekend. Tim Lundstrom and Jeffrey Young were the semi finalists.

The Men's B Division continues to be a one tough division. This weekend it was Mike Sobczyk pounding his way to the Championship taking out Gary Roloff in the Finals. Gary Balavitch and Bob Gengelbach were the semi finalists.

Ken Bonnet charged through the Men's A Division to take the trophy. Ken beat MAC Sparring partner Dale Graham in the Finals, while Dennis Howell and Randy Pagels were the semi finalists.

Joel Bonnett continued his run by defeating Brandon Cortese in the Finals of the Men's Open Division. Joel took home a trophy and \$200, while Brandon left with \$50. Shannon Kohl and Mike Anderson were the semi finalists.

Saturday evening belonged to the doubles divisions. The Men's Doubles went to the kids. Alex and J.D. Brown played great and defeated the team of Twayne Howard and Jason Carroll. Mike and Cory Sobczyk and Michael Wahl and

Gary Roloff were the semi finalists.

The Mixed Doubles Champions were Vallana Perrault and Tim Lundstrom as they defeated Laura Martin and Jeff Tloczynski. The teams of David Harrell and Laura Johnson and Marjorie and Chris Pendell were the semi finalists.

NATIONALS 2003

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ber the challenges he faced going in, and be very proud of the Silver.

Mr. Chuck Kaiser, one of the great benefactors of Michigan racquetball, competed in another of the more entertaining divisions, the Men's 70+ Division. Mr. Kaiser also survived an early tiebreaker. He could not get past the Semis, however, and took a 15-8, 15-11 loss dropping him into the Third/Fourth match. Undaunted, Mr. Kaiser racked up a 15-5, 15-6 win to proudly earn the Bronze.

Pete Harvey lost a disappointing Semi in the Men's 55+A/B, dropping him into the Third/Fourth match. There he came up just short losing a tough two-gamer to earn the Fourth Place medal.

Bob Reou fell victim to first-timer nerves as he lost early in both divisions. He shook that off and pounded through the Consolation Bracket of Men's 35+C/D to earn the Consolation Gold.

Tom Blakeslee, Jeff Johnson and Greg Hodges also competed for Team Michigan in Houston this year.

Although the overall attendance was down, and fewer players from Michigan attended, Nationals is always a first-class event. The days are filled with racquetball, the evenings are filled with parties and social events, and friendship, fun, and camaraderie are everywhere. The USRA works to make this event better every year. Rumor has it that next year will include a "Tournament of Champions" format Pro Stop on top of the existing tournament. If I were you, I'd plan my vacation accordingly. You won't want to miss this event. Circle May 2004 on your calendar now and we hope to see you in Houston then.

(continued from page 4)

Fame inductees. I am sure you will agree to what a great job Mike has done. **Mark Casey** for his designing the Hall of Fame sign located at the Michigan Athletic Club in East Lansing. Mark provided the sign for his costs only, dedicating his time in its design and construction. **Dr. Lewerenz** for his contribution in making possible a Hall of Fame ring mold. This mold makes it possible for inductees to obtain a beautiful custom ring with the inductees name cast on his/her ring and with engraving on the inside of the ring with the name again as well as the date of induction.

The banquet also included a display of racquetball items, photographs and memorabilia to bring back memories of the last 25 years of Michigan Racquetball.

A final comment. Jim Easterling is largely responsible for the continuation of the Michigan Racquetball Hall of Fame. He is the chair of the Hall of Fame Committee and as such leads in assuring the format and place for honoring the players and contributors to the game who have been inducted by their peers. We can assume that his wife Dianne is also highly involved and this year she was included in this honored group. We have a first for the Hall of Fame with a husband and wife both inducted into the Michigan Racquetball Hall of Fame. Congratulations to both of them.

Members of the Michigan Racquetball Hall of Fame Committee include: Jim Easterling, Lynn Hahn, James Woolcock, Felecia Mann, Irene Ackerman-Chmura, David Brower, and William Gottlieb. They did a great job.



Hall of Fame Members - back left - Easterling, Minto, Driver, Wilhelm, Russell, Caretti, Pudduck, Lewernz, Yellen, Hahn; front - Fecher, Easterling, Ackerman-Chmura



2003 Inductee Duane Russell receives plaque from Dick Caretti

2003 Inductee Dianne Easterling receives plaque from J. D. Driver



Banquet Food line



2002 Inductee Randy Minto enjoys banquet with Hall of Famer Bob Wilhelm and Jim Floyd

FRANKLIN RACQUET CLUB REFEREE CLINIC

- Karen Green

Monday, February 10, 2003, Jim Easterling, member of the U.S.R.A. National Rules Committee presented a clinic for members of the Franklin Racquet Club racquetball leagues. Jim observed play in the doubles league and then entertained questions as well as presenting players with tips to improve their game, both in singles and doubles. The session was extremely informative, with the players engaged in great dialogue and conversation about racquetball. With an event of this nature, players were inspired to take their game up to the next level. Thank you to Jim for the knowledge and expertise that was shared with our players.



TEN THINGS WOULD CHANGE ABOUT THE GAME

(continued from page 5)

your scheduled time. Then, you see the tournament director tolerate such tardiness. Tardy players should face forfeiture, as in the rules, and tournament directors that don't enforce this should be censured. All tournament directors.....spend a weekend watching Felicia Mann run one of her tournaments.....she'll teach you about this.

8. What happened to Saturday night parties?

My formative years in this sport were in my adopted state of Iowa. Our tournaments there had parties every Saturday night. I became the racquetball poet there. After a pitcher of beer, they'd prop me up on a chair, and I'd read some ridiculous ditty that I'd just scrawled on a napkin. They were a blast and might be tenable again. Remember, all of us old guys' and girls' kids are now grown.

9. What happened to trophies, pictures for the winners, and other cool stuff?

Jim Easterling still takes pictures and Paula Saad did, too, when she hosted State Doubles some years back. Jim then sends you the picture in the mail.....great! A real topper is Diana Courtney....she sends you a printed version of the draw sheet if you win....and your name is spelled correctly. Great! How come plaques are so prevalent? What happened to the famous trophy? I once won a beer stein for a trophy during the LaCrosse, Wisconsin Oktoberfest tournament. That one even served a function! See #8 above.

10. Where are the "characters" in the game?

We've all gotten too fundamentally sound. All of our swings look alike now. We all dress alike. Nobody hits really funky shots anymore. We're all pretty boring. Remember Radiation Man's "half-speed" overhead pass? Well, I don't know what you call that shot. That darned thing was pretty effective. Dan Verbeck runs up and cuts off ceiling balls. I hate him for that, except when he does it on our doubles team. That's the only "idiosyncrasy" I see anymore. What happened to the "shovel-like" forehands we used to see from converted paddleball players? Where are those funky overhead serves? How about the backhand overhead, reverse pinch? Or, the Jim Floyd, roll-the-ball-out by hitting it between your legs, and then laughing at you afterwards?

Come to think of it, when was the last time we saw someone have as much fun on the court as Jim has when he plays? How come no one brings their "sport drink" in a mysterious brown bottle like Radiation Man used to do? No one wears a towel anymore....oh, yeah, we've got gloves now! The big amazement now is to figure out how we are all going to get through a match with all of the prosthetic devices we now wear. Let's resolve to do better here. Someone invent a new shot, stroke, or something. After all, they used to laugh at Marty Hogan at the St. Louis Jewish Community Center courts, with that high whipping backswing and stroke.

(Editor's Note: This article reflects the opinion of the author and does not constitute the opinion of RAM or the RAM Board of Directors.)

MAC Open Championship - The Best Way to Warm Up for States

- Twayne M. Howard

The Michigan Athletic Club hosted the inaugural MAC Open Championship over St. Patrick's Day weekend, a great warm-up for the State Singles Championship. Once again Paula Spagnuolo and her crew threw a great tournament featuring long-sleeved shirts, great food and lots of great racquetball.

The MAC tournaments are always popular with the Juniors and this tournament had three divisions featuring 20 juniors. Our youngest competitors were in the Juniors 10- Division. In the Final, Bradley Schopierey defeated Dan Ponidexter. The semifinalists were Logan Doezeema and Chris Symons.

When the dust settled in the Junior's 12- Division, Andrew Price defeated Harrison Doezeema to earn yet another Championship. The semifinalists were Ari Present and Matt Barbuscak.

The Junior's 16- featured a full draw of 8, and featured some of Michigan's up-and-coming racquetball players. The Final featured a familiar match-up as Nick Tloczynski got past Steven Lenio for the win and the gold.

Six ladies competed in the round robin Women's B/C Division. After five rounds of play, Maureen Price went undefeated to win the Championship while Marjorie Pendell took Second. Jamie Campanelli, Judy Kohl, Jacqueline Saad and Mary Ursal rounded out the Division.

The Men's 55+C/D Division Champion was the MAC's own Dick Tedford who went undefeated through this round-robin division outpacing Roger Kamps and Dave Tole.

The Men's 55+A/B also featured three tough competitors. After three rounds, Tom Sharum defeated Art Murphy and Mike Wahl to win the Division.

The Men's 45+C/D Division went to Jay Marcotullio as he defeated the MAC's

Ed Celmons in the Finals. The semifinalists were Greg McClellan and Russell Clark.

A tough Men's 45+A/B Division went to John Coaker as he out-battled Al Kohl to win the Championship. The semifinalists were Art Murphy and Claude Finley.

A Men's 25+C/D Division cannot be held this year, without these two players: Dan Mullin and Bob Shurlow. This match-up goes back and forth, this time, Dan pulled out the Championship. Rick Foster and Tom McArthur were the semifinalists.

The Men's 19+ Division featured several players also playing in the Open Division. The Final went to Brandon Cortese who defeated Lewis Forrest to earn the Championship. The semifinalists were Augie Pasko and Buzz Carhart.

The Men's D Championship went to Drew Campanelli as he defeated Scott Slagboom to take the Gold. Tim McEnerney and Rick Foster were the semifinalists.

In the Men's C Final, Bob Shurlow squared off against Jay Marcotullio. A medallist in many events this year, Bob was unable to hold off Jay as Jay won the match and the Gold. The semifinalists were hard-hitting junior Jermaine Brock and Daniel Mullin.

The Men's B Division Championship went to Larry Westdorp who got past Gary Roloff in the Final. The semifinalists were Vallana Perrault and John Williams.

The Men's A Division went to another MAC member as Ken Bonnett defeated Tom Ford in the Final. Vallana Perrault and Jeff Contardi were the semifinalists. Wow, way to go get 'em Vallana - semis in both Men's A and Men's B.

The Men's Open Division featured most of the usual "West Coast" suspects, and when it was all over, Joel Bonnett got past Mike Anderson to earn the Championship. Brandon Cortese and Shannon Kohl were the semifinalists.

The B/C Doubles featured a full draw of 8 teams. At the end of the evening, Ron

Chirio and Ron Griggs defeated Dan Mullin and Jay Marcotullio to take the title. The teams of Gary Roloff and Mike Wahl and Marjorie Pendell and Chris Pendell were the semifinalists.

On these courts, the best racquetball players have been played and this year's tournament was no exception. Congratulations to all the players and to the MAC in Grand Rapids for a super St. Patrick's Day weekend. If you haven't played in this event before, mark your calendar for next year's tourney, you don't want to miss it.

AMPRO CAMP AND CLINIC

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Where: Players Athletic Club
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When: July 29th & 30th ~
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2003 STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

Mens Open

1st - Jim Floyd
2nd - Joel Bonnett
Brandon Cortese
Jeff Mullins

Mens AA

1st - Paul Licari
2nd - Chuck White
Mark Werthman
Jodi Sparks

Mens A

1st - Mark Novak
2nd - Andre Roy
Randy Pagels
Anthony Connell

Mens B

1st - Emilio D'Alise
2nd - Tony Gardner
Alex Brown
Mark Zigila

Mens C

1st - Bob Reou
2nd - Robert Shurlow
Barry Dennis
Dan Mullin

Mens D

1st - Dan Verduyn
2nd - Jesse Kramer
Mark Chester
Burkhard Klosner

Mens 25

1st - Jeff Mullins
2nd - Augie Gus Pasko
Paul Stanwick
Jodi Sparks

Mens 25-30 C/D

1st - Dennis Dinauer
2nd - Robert Shurlow
Steve Jovanoski
Dan Mullin

Mens 30 A/B

1st - Greg Lewerenz
2nd - Todd Currier
Kevin O'keefe
Ben Marciniak-Jennings

Mens 35

1st - Mike Anderson
2nd - Steve Goedker

Mens 35

Paul Licari
John Kundrot

Mens 35/40 A/B

1st - Dave Erdman
2nd - Ed Bell
Randy Pagels
Mike McMillan

Mens 40

1st - Jack White
2nd - Jeff Connell
Mark Novak
Chris Kelly

Mens 40 C/D

1st - Bob Reou
2nd - Dave Verduyn
Paul Schultz
Jeff Tloczynski

Mens 45

1st - Jack White
2nd - Tom Blakeslee
Lewis Forrest
George Yarbenet

Mens 45 A/B

1st - Dave Smolinski
2nd - Dave Erdman
Mike Easthope
Al Klann

Mens 45 C/D

1st - Barry Dennis
2nd - Michael Kitchen
Randy Andresen
Edward Clemens

Mens 50

1st - Jim Santino
2nd - Tom Blakeslee
Jim Panasiewicz
Buzz Carhart

Mens 50 A/B

1st - John Gervarsi
2nd - Keith Vogel
Mark Zigila
Jack Nash

Mens 50 C/D

1st - Sherman Gipson
2nd - Kenneth Smith
Richard Worobec
Larry Szembelan

Mens 55

1st - Ken Bonnett
2nd - Bill Hagedorn
Robert Gravelyn
Joe Tomlinson

Mens 55 A/B

1st - George Goudie
2nd - Mike Wahl
Don Edwards
Terry Streeter

Mens 60

1st - Tom Sharum
2nd - Richard Worobec
Charles Wheelihan

Mens 65

1st - David Lund
2nd - Donald Revels
Chuck Kaiser
Bob Dynes

Mens 70

1st - Chuck Kaiser

Womens Open

1st - Paula Saad
2nd - Laura Patterson
Felicia Mann
Melody Gorno

Womens 35

1st - Paula Saad
2nd - Felicia Mann
Melody Gorno
Barb Barber

Womens 40

1st - Barb Barber

Womens 45

1st - Lesley Kishigan
2nd - Laura Patterson
DeLois Leaphart
Claire Kruse

Womens 50

1st - Sharon Huczek
2nd - Jan Insko

Womens A

1st - Barb Barber
2nd - Wendy Ford

Womens B

1st - Lisa Woerdeman
2nd - Marjorie Pendell

Womens B

Lorna Rose

Womens D

1st - Lisa Heidrich
2nd - Abby McClellan
Kim Novak
Jacqueline Saad

Womens 25-50 C/D

1st - Abby McClellan
2nd - Lisa Heidrich
Kim Novak
Thelma Howard

Womens 35-45 A/B

1st - Diana Courtney
2nd - Stephanie Huvaere
Wendy Ford
Marjorie Pendell

Junior 18

1st - Alex Brown
2nd - Mark Chester
Jesse Kramer

Junior 16

1st - Mark Chester
2nd - Nic Minto
Chris Cummings
Frank Antonelli

Junior 14

1st - Michael Krieger
2nd - Nick Tloczynski
Matt Bernstein
Steven Lenio
Frank Antonelli
Josh Zeid
Joey Gale
Michael Fobar

Junior 12

1st - Andrew Price
2nd - Kevin Clark
Jordan Emerson
Mike Dibble
Matt Barbuscak
Chris Cardelli
Dave Garbarino

Junior 10

1st - Dan Poindexter
2nd - Trent Chester
Matt Woerdeman
Kevin White
James VanNoord

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