

RACQUETBALL

IN REVIEW



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USA Takes American Zone Competition

by Michael Arnolt

USA Coach Ed Martin has a philosophy that weaker teams improve through instruction and playing superior opposition. By using that measure, his "mission" is to help other countries "develop their game and raise their skill level."

If the results of the racquetball competition at the second American Zone Championships are any example, then Martin can consider it Mission Accomplished. The combined men and women's team merely won 32 of 33 matches, all but five of 68 games, and outscored its closest pursuer, Canada, by more than a two to one margin. Mexico, finished third, only one match behind Canada.

Host country Ecuador was fourth, followed by Costa Rica while Bolivia and Columbia tied for sixth. Puerto Rico and Venezuela were eighth and ninth respectively.

But the crushing U.S. victory at the zone competition between the Americas held November 28 through December 8 was only a portion of the happenings. That can be expected, considering that:

— Quito, the capital of Ecuador, was celebrating a once-in-a-lifetime event — its 450th birthday.

— When humans who are used to competing at or about sea level get together nearly two miles closer to the sky, then they can expect to find themselves short of breath from time to time.

— Incidentally, the zone competition also just happened to be the qualifying site for the World Games in London next July. Only 11 men and 11 women from North and South America could qualify.

The primary purpose of the American Zone Competition was to select the best teams in the Americas. However, it was obvious by the representation — only two countries, U.S. and Ecuador, fielded full men's and women's teams and only three countries had doubles teams — that qualifying for the World Games was the priority for most countries.

"Because of what happened here, there may be some other means of selecting World Games participants" in the future, said Luke St. Onge, executive director of the International Amateur Racquetball Federation (IARF), sanctioning body for all international events. St. Onge said he would discuss the issue with the IARF World Congress at its next meeting.

What will be though is only coincidental to what happened. The USA, led by Intercollegiate champ Andy Roberts and team captain Cindy Baxter, took the top three places in the men's division and first, third, and fourth in the women's category. Despite the near sweep, the U.S. like all other countries may only send a maximum of two men and two women to

compete in London.

Columbia and Mexico each qualified two men and two women. Bolivia, Canada, Ecuador, and Puerto Rico qualified one man a piece. On the women's side, Canada and Ecuador will send two each and Costa Rica qualified one position. In all, 11 men and 11 women from the two continents may compete in the field of 80 next July.

While the U.S. and Canada were prohibitive favorites to finish two players among the top four in both divisions, no such odds could be given to any of the other countries. Even the betting line on the Canadians changed.

Canada, like six other countries, brought only a skeleton team. By the coach's admission, the decision "nearly backfired". It could have been a fatal shot, as all three of their big guns were ill or injured.

The team format separated round robins for the No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 singles players and doubles from each country. If a country brought but one player, he was forced to play No. 1. The top two finishers in each round robin were virtually guaranteed berths for their countries in the World Games; however, they were placed in a regular draw to determine their order of finish.



Because only one of the brackets had competitors from each country, play-offs were devised for the remaining spots.

There were a number of outstanding performances, culminating with the singles competition, but Mexico is a country which has to be pleased with its team.

Despite the absence of its top player, Raul Canales who has dropped out of competition since the World Championships in Sacramento, Raul Armentariz and Arturo Martin qualified their country past some worthy opponents. Diana Almedia and Angelica Rosiles duplicated the men's feat by finishing seventh and eighth in their division.

Bolivia's Gustavo Retamozo earned a spot by coming out alive in the tough No. 1 round robin. Two of his three losses in the eight-man round robin were by the identical tiebreaker scores of 14-15.

Ecuador's Dan Walker left the No. 2 bracket with only a tiebreaker loss to the USA Junior champ Doug Ganim. Andres Guzman of Columbia defeated Walker handily in the singles competi-



Uniforms make it easy to tell the players. And there is no mistaking these two as Cindy Baxter (front) and Crystal Fried do battle in the finals. Baxter won.

More Quito — Inside!

USA's Ken Kaihlanen (left) and Andy Roberts wait deep in the back court to see just where and how that doggone ball is going at two miles above sea level.

tion and then went on to capture a tiebreaker match from one of the tournament's best players, Roger Harrisersad, Calgary, Canada. Harrisersad, who finished third in the World Championships, suffered a severe shoulder injury early in the tournament and was unable to hit any crisp forehand shots. He was relegated to using the backhand on both sides of the court.

Despite a stomach ailment, 17-year-old Crystal Fried of Medicine Hat, Canada decimated everyone, including USA's Mary Dee, who finished on top in Sacramento in the No. 2 round robin to earn the chance to play for first. After a 15-5 thrashing by Kathy Gluvna of the USA in the first game of the semifinals, Fried controlled the center and sent the Memphis State University junior on a tour of the court and in search of oxygen, which Gluvna took at every opportunity during the tiebreaker. Fried won the last two games 7 and 11.

Then came Cindy Baxter, Lewistown, PA resident, who lost only one game during the round robin and then allowed no opponent more than six points in any of her remaining six matches. The 30-year-old Baxter, who won the 1983 U.S. National Singles and finished runner-up in 1984, proved the worthiness of her No. 1 seeding with sharp forehand and backhand passes in the 15-3, 15-6 finals win over Fried.

Carol Dupuy, who plays No. 1 for Canada, sparkled but didn't shine. Beseated all week by a cold, she lost in a tiebreaker to Baxter during the round robin and went down in two games to finish fifth behind Dee.

Diane Bullard, former U.S. National Singles champ from Miami Lakes, FL and Julia Pinnell of Winter Park, FL showed they had the right stuff by finishing first and third, respectively, in the AA bracket of male players not eligible to play in the championships.

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Bullard and Pinnell qualified for the team recently by winning the U.S. National Doubles in Boise, ID in October.

Their male counterparts from the 1984 Doubles, Kelvin Vantrease, Findlay, OH and Dan Obremski, North Huntingdon, PA were not tested in any of the three doubles matches they played.

It wasn't coincidence that the international flair of racquetball came to the Quito Racquet Club during its biggest celebration in 50 years, a week-long occasion complete with bull fights, circus, a massive food festival, dancing in the streets, and other revelry.

Al Walker, IARF vice president for South America convinced the World Congress to award the games to Quito because Ecuador would be the host for the 1987 Pan American Games. In addition, the Ecuadorian Olympic Committee selected racquetball as one of the demonstration sports in the games which follow the Olympics. (Though it had not yet been determined at press time, it is possible that financing difficulties will result in shifting the games from Ecuador to Indianapolis.)

NCR, the major sponsor of the American Zone Championships, is prepared to help finance the racquetball portion of the Pan Am Games, according to Walker. Five other international companies — AMF Head, ITT, Polaroid, Shick, Xerox, and eight other national companies — donated \$14,000 to put on the American Zone Competition II, Walker said. Quito Racquet Club donated the court time, maintenance and management for the tournament. Contributing from Ecuador were Alpha Tours, Cersa, the textile firms of Ecuapunto and Famitex, Marathon Sports, H.J. Becdach Construction, shirt manufacturer Printofex and Supermaxi, a supermarket chain.

They also footed the bill for the tournament's crowning achievement, the festive awards banquet at the Viejo Quito Tennis Club where each of the nine countries serenaded the more than 250 players, coaches, officials, and dignitaries.

An organizing committee provided each country with two or three attaches to help them through any rough spots they may have incurred with the culture and language barriers. The Americans and Canadians benefited most. Several of these attaches took a leave of absence from work for eight to 12 days, according to Al Walker, owner of the club who orchestrated the tournament and its surrounding activities. "These people (volunteers) did it out of the kindness of their hearts," he said.

Because of the well-laid plans and the attaches, the tournament wasn't all pinches, passes, splats and ceiling shots at Quito. Other activities included sunning, fiesta, siesta, shopping, bargaining, trading, dancing, dining, and meeting some top salt-of-the-earth people in the middle of the world as Quito is designated (for being only minutes from the equator).

Because there generally were only two matches a day, participants had plenty of opportunity to bask in the sun, sightsee, enjoy the night time festivities, and purchase quality leather and woolen goods for many times less than retail prices in countries outside Latin America.

The biggest surprise, according to John Hamilton, executive director of the Canadian Racquetball Association, was the playing conditions of the courts, the quality of food and the quality of lodging in Quito.

Based on information contained in a

series of recent articles by free lance writer Carole George and former professional Steve Keeley, the Canadians were prepared for a sub-par playing and living environment, Hamilton said.

One variable that everyone counted on did exist. The altitude. At nearly 10,000 feet above sea level, players experienced a faster ball and some difficulty breathing. The Penn ball cans were opened two to three weeks prior to competition to slow them down. Ceiling balls still bounded too close to the shortline.

At least half of the 12-member USA team required oxygen during the competition, according to Coach Ed Martin. "The altitude definitely affected us, though it didn't have any effect on winning or losing" any matches, Martin said. Arriving a few days before the competition helped the players adapt, he said.

Though the Canadian team prepared by playing at Ft. Banff in the Rocky Mountains, about 5,000 feet above sea level, Hamilton agreed that arriving early in Quito helped. "The longer you stay at altitude the more chance of getting fit."

The anticipated showdown between the world's racquetball superpowers never materialized. Hamilton said a lack of finances made it impossible to field a full team.



IARF Executive Director Luke St. Onge makes a brief address to the players, coaches, and dignitaries at the AZC Awards Banquets just prior to a slide presentation.

"I was disappointed that Canada didn't bring a full team," Martin said. "I was looking forward to a rematch" of Sacramento, he added. Ross Harvey of Canada defeated Roberts in a 15-14 tiebreaker in July.

Under a pre-tournament agreement in Sacramento by the IARF World Congress, World Championship finalists qualified a slot for themselves at the World Games. Should those individuals not attend the World Games, the countries they represent would not be guaranteed that position. Thus, all countries were urged to bring full teams to Quito.

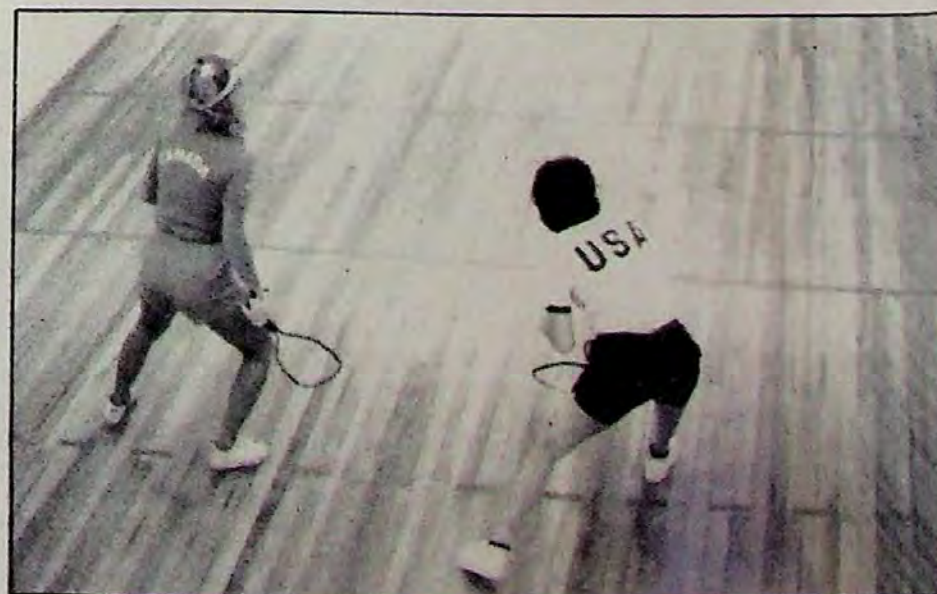
Minus a full-strength Canadian team, the U.S. dominated as it had in previous international competition. At least this time around, Coach Martin humbly suggests, domination was not the purpose. After all, the U.S. was expected to win.

"I don't feel like it was our mission to win," Martin said. "Our mission is to help them (Latin America) develop their game and raise their skill level."

(Continued on page 3)



USA Team Coach Ed Martin addresses the more than 250 people attending the American Zone Competition Awards Banquet at the Viejo Quito Tennis Club the last night of the tournament.



USA's Cindy Baxter follows through with backhand in her finals match with Canada's teen phenom, Crystal Fried. Baxter ruled dominated 15-3, 15-6.

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(Listed Alphabetically)

1. Ektelon
2. Penn
3. RAM
4. Regent
5. Sportcraft
6. Voit
7. Wilson

(Continued from page 2)

Good instruction and playing superior opponents are the keys to improving the quality of play, Martin said, adding there is a 100 percent change in play since last year's tournament in Costa Rica. Hamilton noted the vast improvement since Sacramento competition in July.

"In Costa Rica we were playing D and C players," Martin said. "And now we're playing B and A players." He cites the Ecuadorian team as a prime example of this two-part theory. Tom Neill, a top player from Arizona, coached the team for more than a month prior to the tournament. The team qualified one man and two women.

Having discussed thoroughly the U.S. role in racquetball, Martin, who donates his time as team coach, started to get more comfortable on the cramped Eastern flight home, but stopped short. He leaned forward to make a point.

His mission at Quito, and at past international competitions, was to help other countries develop, he acknowledged. A deadly serious grin in place, Martin warned, "But next year at the World Games, it will be different." Martin's goal is an obvious one: To Win.

Michael Arnolt is a free-lance writer from Indianapolis.



Michael Arnolt, pictured above with Ed Martin, USA Team Coach at the Middle of the Earth, is AARA Rules Commissioner and a free lance writer based in Indianapolis.

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American Zone Competition Notebook

For the second straight international competition, USA Coach Ed Martin has fielded teams that have won despite the absence of his top players. That's a handicap he may not be able to afford next summer at the World Games in London.

Two of the nation's top male players, Dan Ferris, St. Cloud, MN, and Jim Cascio, Lancaster, PA, were removed from the team after failing to appear at the World Championships in Sacramento for what Martin considered unacceptable excuses. They, of course, were not at the American Zone Competitions.

Also missing in Quito, was Marci Drexler, the U.S. National Singles champ. Drexler of North Hollywood, CA was unable to make the trip because of illness.

"We're going to have to bring a whole team and the strongest team we can muster," said Martin who has been hearing reports that some of the world's top professional players are in search of amateur status.

Among those rumored to be opting for a change are Heather Stupp and Rueben Gonzalez. Gonzalez, a native of Puerto Rico who lives in New York, currently is No. 6 among male professionals and has been rated as high as fourth. Stupp, of Canada, is ranked 15th in the WPRA.

Sport, also, unfortunately, is a matter of money.

USA coach, Ed Martin: "I don't think there is an entity or group of people more important to the national and international development of racquetball than the U.S. National Team. They are the most visible group of players in the world... but they need funds to continue."

The professionals aren't doing anything to develop the sport, said Martin, reiterating the necessity and importance of showcasing the nation's amateurs as instructors, ambassadors, and players whenever and wherever

possible. The U.S. team is supported primarily by donations and receive assistance from sponsors Diversified Products, Lite Beer, and Penn Athletic Products.

John Hamilton, executive director of the Canadian Racquetball Association: "We originally looked at sending a full team (to Quito), but because of finances we couldn't." Sending a full team to compete in Sacramento depleted travel money for the remainder of the year, Hamilton noted.

The lack of money, and decision to bring a skeleton team nearly cost Canada a shot at locking up its position in the World Games. Three of the country's top players, all of whom qualified Canada for the games, were slowed by injury or illness in Quito.

Al Walker, IARF vice president for South America: "My belief is that if racquetball wants to continue on an international sense, it has to move and go outside the United States and Canada for competition." Walker said the currency in Latin American countries has devaluated 300 to 3000 percent in the last five years. Unless sponsored, Walker said, it is extremely difficult for amateur athletes to travel.

"When Latins do travel, it is a great hardship," he added.

No, you can't believe everything you read or hear.

Canadian and American and other racquetball players traveling to Ecuador for the first time learned quickly and to their delight, that they had been misinformed.

Upon arriving in Ecuador you receive three admonitions: Don't drink the water, pass up the food offered by street vendors, and automobiles, particularly the taxis, have the right of way.

The first two warnings were to prevent stomach disorders which most managed to avoid. The last warning, however was a practical matter if, as a pedestrian, you wanted to live to tell

about it.

On first inspection from the street, the traffic moved much the same as in any major U.S. city. Horns blared as irate drivers informed others of their inadequate habits.

As a passenger in a taxi, you learned otherwise. Much of the horn blowing was directed at pedestrians to politely or impolitely warn them that they should be cautious. Rather it was to curtly warn them that the right of way belongs to the auto and that the streets are for driving, not to walk from one side to the other.

Additionally, while the Spanish word "pare" is translated to stop, it isn't taken literally. At stop signs, it's your option. At stop lights, particularly at night, it's also your option. One four-passenger cab carrying seven American players, complete with gear, never skipped an RPM as he sent his car through a stop light that turned red more than two blocks before he reached it.

The American Zone Competition was the fifth international event in which the U.S. has participated according to Luke St. Onge, executive director of the American Amateur Racquetball Association.

Earlier events were the combined World Games and World Championships, July, 1981 at Santa Clara, CA attended by six countries; AZC attended by three countries, March, 1983 at Stockton, CA; Tourneo de la Raza attended by nine countries, October, 1983 in San Jose, Costa Rica, and IARF World Championships II attended by 12 countries in July at Sacramento.

Viva Quito. Viva Racquetball.

Racquetball, certainly an infant when compared to the 450 years old boasted by Quito, host for the AZC II, but when it came to news coverage, racquetball didn't lack attention.

Headline news of the racquetball

tournament appeared daily for nearly two weeks in the two or three daily newspapers and was present two to five minutes a day on the television.

Traditionally, the highlight of the banquet at international competition is the song performed by each team.

At Sacramento, the U.S. team admirably sang a traditional song, "Take Me Out To The Ball Game." Coach Martin expected something in the same vein in Quito. You should have seen the look on his face the moment teammates Andy Roberts and Doug Ganim brainstormed and came up with "I'm All Shook Up."

Acting as the mature mentor of the group, Martin's first reaction was one of disbelief. And a definite, NO. But when he heard the crooning talents of Ganim and Roberts, he bid them good luck.

Choreographer Ganim led the entire pelvic-thrusting and knee-shaking team through two verses, leaving a solo spot for "Elvis" Roberts to do in Spanish. Sans mirrored sun glasses, open-necked shirts, and raised sport jacket collars, they wowed the audience.

And who was in the center of the Presley impersonators and female chorus, belting out one of the King of Rock 'n' Roll's greatest hits?

Coach Martin, for sure.

Quito Racquetball Club took on the appearance of a medical clinic from the start to finish of the tournament. Three or four aides and a physician were on hand to provide assistance in case of injuries or reaction to the altitude.

Though he may not have been the first, Dan Obremski received the full attention of the medical staff when his tanned complexion turned a whiter shade of pale. Oxygen cleared his light-headedness almost immediately and medicine stopped his stomach disorder within a day.

(Continued on page 10)

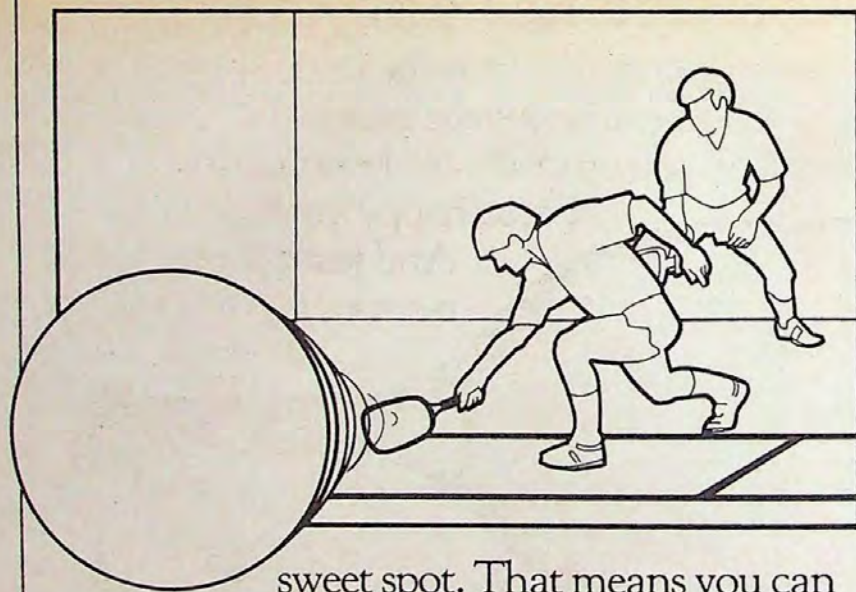
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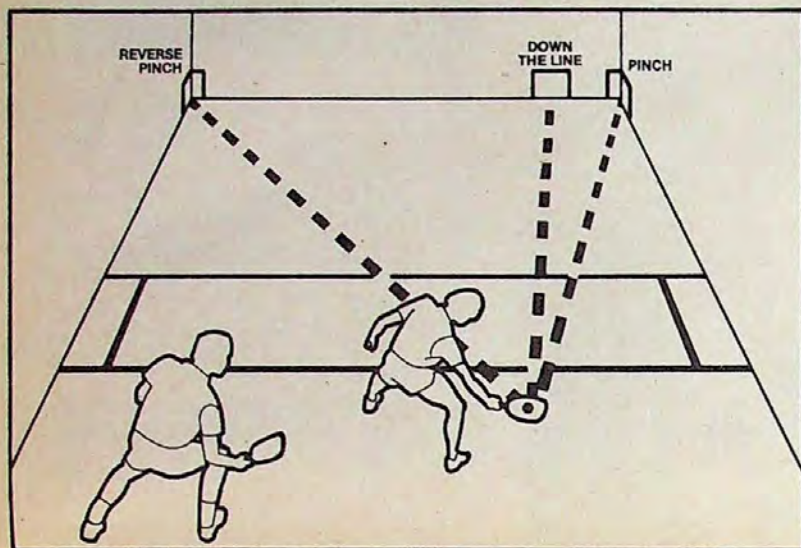
In the competitive world of advanced racquetball, you have to be aggressive to win.



Steve Strandemo,
racquetball
professional,
teacher, and
author of
Advanced
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And the Impulse is designed to help with the most aggressive shot of all—the cut-off. The Impulse's aerodynamically slick profile gives

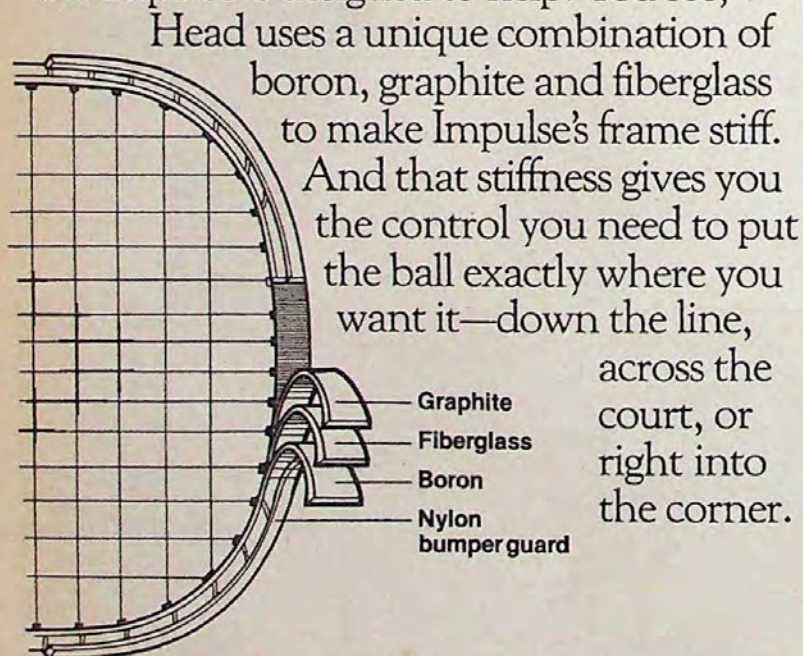


Be aggressive. Cut off a "left-up" shot with a quick racquet like the Impulse. You'll have a lot of offensive options and control of center court.

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HEAD'S NEW IMPULSE CAN HELP KEEP YOU ALIVE, EVEN WHEN I HIT A KILLER.

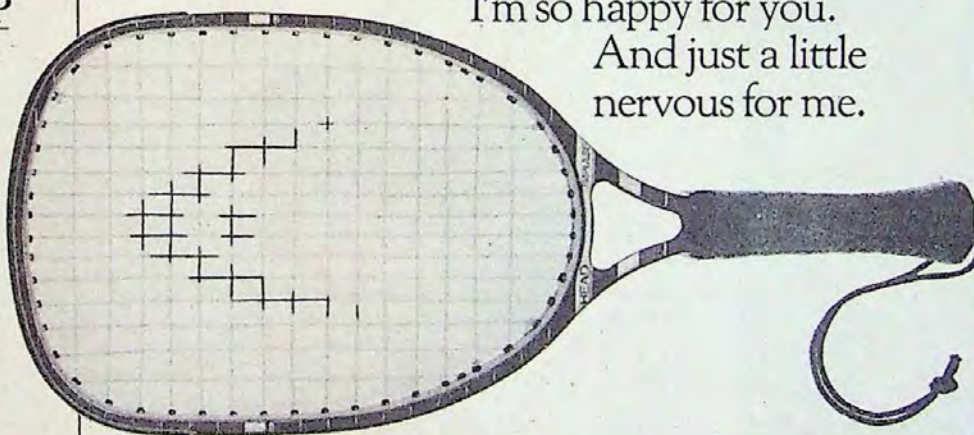
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NEW DIRECTIONS

by Luke St. Onge

The Year In Review



In May, the National Singles Championships were held in Houston and were a true happening in our sport with over 900 entries, and, at times, 3,000 spectators and players crowding the Downtown YMCA.

More than \$90,000 in membership rebates have been returned to the states associations, making each state organization strong, as evidenced by the growth in membership.

Dan Ferris, Men's Open Champion

January is certainly the time for reflection on the past year as well as a time for looking into a promising future for the coming year.

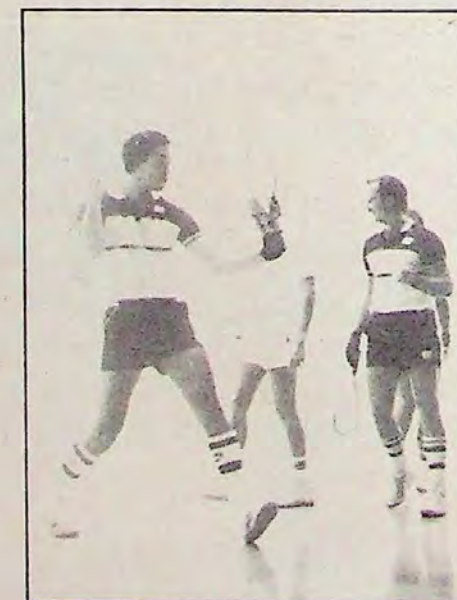
1984 was a great year for our sport. Beginning with the Lite/AARA Regionals, which were for the first time qualifying events for the Nationals, all competitions were unequalled in success. The National Intercollegiate hosted 32 colleges with 250 entries, and over \$8,000 in scholarship money was distributed by Lite Beer.

Andy Roberts, Intercollegiate Champion



July found the U.S. Team in competition in the World Championships held in Sacramento, CA, and winning its second straight World Championships event.

Stan Wright & Steve Trent, victorious in Sacramento, CA.



August inaugurated the first Elite National Training Camp with 120 players in attendance from five countries. Ages ranged from 13 to 74 years for both men and women. Racquetball rules were updated and over 70,000 new rule books have been distributed.

Six A.M. drills at the Elite National Training Camp.



In October, 250 teams vied for National titles in Boise, ID, at the U.S. Doubles Championships.

The Junior League Program, sponsored by DP and Penn Athletic Products Company came into the spotlight; also Penn continued its "Juniors Only" tournament.

Kelvin Vantrease preparing his backhand for the Mixed Doubles win at the National Doubles tournament, Boise, ID.



Cindy Baxter, USA, and Crystal Fried, Canada, in Quito, Ecuador.

Then, finally, in November, the year ended with the U.S. National Racquetball Team qualifying for the World Games by competing in the American Zone Competition in Quito, Ecuador.

Luke St. Onge refereeing the 18 & Under Doubles Semi-finals match.

Membership in the AARA mounted to 35,000 and the American Racquetball Handicap System made the National Rankings solid.



Luke St. Onge with Todd Gordenier of the American Racquetball Handicap System.

What does 1985 promise? All of the above, plus the excitement of the World Games in London this summer, followed by the World Masters Games in Toronto, Canada for ages 35-60, both men and women.

We have projected total membership to increase to 45,000 in 1985, and we expect the AARA to take a more total role in leadership in the industry. Our special thanks go to Lite Beer, DP, Penn Athletic Products Company, and Wilson Sporting Goods for their continued support of our great sport.



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CALENDAR

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JANUARY, 1985

January 4

Lite/AARA Adult Regionals, Region 6
Olympiad Health and Racquetball
2121 N. Woodlawn
Wichita, KS

January 4-6

Super 7 =4
Jim Hiser
G-2140 Fairway Drive
Davison, Michigan 48423
Jim Hiser
313-653-9602

New Year Open
Mountain Valley Court Club
North Conway, NH 03101
Susan Rowan
603-346-5774

Sundown East Tournament
Sundown East
6810 Kinnest
East Syracuse, NY 13057
313-437-1303

January 9-12

Tournament
Country Court House
10300 S. Redwood Rd.
South Jordan, UT 84065
Steve Benson

January 10-13

New Mexico Invitational
Tom Young's Athletic Club & Spa
2250 Wyoming Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87112

January 11

Golden Traingle YMCA Benefit
Manor Courts South
100 Roessler Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
Hal Welsh
412-227-6413

Tournament
Metropolitan Health Spa
Pocatello, ID
Sacramento City Open
Wall Street Racquetball Courts
3120 Bradshaw Road
Sacramento, CA 95827
916-363-4838

January 11-13

Third Annual Adirondak Open
Glen Falls YMCA
Star Route Box 130
Glen Falls, NY 12801
Dennis Bradle
518-798-1036

Sacramento City Open
Wall Street Racquetball Courts
3120 Bradshaw Road
Sacramento, CA
Debbie
916-363-4838

3rd Annual Cash Classic
The Courthouse Racquet Club
1545 Helton Drive
Florence, AL 35630
Boogie Stancell
205-764-0034

Pro-Am Doubles
Plymouth Racquet Club
2800 Fernbrook Lane
Plymouth, MN 55441
Margaret Dykhoff

Tournament
Salem Racquetball Club
Manor Parkway
Salem, NH 03079
Al Parchuck
603-893-8612

Disadvantaged Children Benefit
Manor Courts South
100 Roessler Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
Hal Welsh
412-227-6413

Doubles Championship
Racquet Club of Meadville
French and Poplar Streets
Meadville, PA 16335
Nancy Manning
814-724-3524

Tournament
Harbor Pines
Melbourne, FL

Vermont State Doubles
STBA

Metropolitan Health Spa (3)
Pocatello, ID

New Jersey Mixed Doubles
Championships (4)
The Atlantic Club
1904 Atlantic Ave.
Wall Township, NJ 07719
201-223-2100

Indy Open (3)
Singles
Court Club
3455 Harper Road
Indianapolis, IN 46240
Sonny Moon
317-846-1111

Powell Open (3)
Mountain West Club
740 Lane 9 1/2 R.R.3
Powell, WY 82435
754-5775

Open Tournament
Powell, WY

Michigan Championships Series #5
Oakland, Racquetball Club
Oakland, MI

Wichita State University Open (3)
Heskett Center
Wichita State University
Wichita, KS 67208
316-689-3210

UCP Benefit
Supreme Court Club
West Springfield, MA
Ken Pulsford
413-781-0181

January 17-20

Pepsi Classic (3)
Fairmont Athletic Club
3328 W. Genesee St.
Syracuse, NY 13219
315-488-3114
Dianne Springer

January 18

Tournament
Broadwater Athletic Club
4920 Highway 12 West
Helena, MT 59601

January 18-20

Gillette Parks and Recreation
Dyna Jet Open (3)
1000 Douglas Highway
Gillette, WY 82716
Jim Crisp
682-7406

Broadwater Athletic Club (3)
4920 Highway 12 West
Helena, MT 59601

Cancer Society Open (3)
Manchester Court Club
1 Le Clerc Circle
Manchester, NH 03101
Boy Scouts of American Benefit
Racquetball Tournament

Oxford Racquet & Golf Club
North Oxford, MA
Al DuPont
683-4870

Lewerenz Classic Invitational
STBA

Dyna Jet Open
Gillette Parks & Recreation
Wyoming

January 23-26

Tournament
Feeling Great
1194 S. Main St.
Springville, UT 84663
Judy Watkins

January 24-27

Earthquake Open (3)
Salinas Racquet Club
20 E. San Joaquin
Salinas, CA 93901

New Mexico State Juniors
Championships
Rio Grande Sporting Club
2500 Yale Blvd. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

January 25

Tournament
The Club
Twin Falls, ID
Tournament
Court Club East
916 S. Gouverneur
Wichita, KS 67207

January 25-27

Grand Rapids Patrons Tour #3
Lee Frederickson
12539 Terry Ave.
Wayland, MI 49348
616-672-7736

(Continued on page 10)

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Dates To Remember

U.S. National Intercollegiate Championships
The Racquet Club, Memphis, TN, April 12-14, 1985

U.S. National Singles Championship
presented by Lite Beer from Miller

(qualifying required in Regionals)
Downtown YMCA, Houston, TX, May 23-27, 1985

U.S. National Junior Championships
(qualifying required in Regionals)
Newport Beach Sporting House, Newport Beach, CA,
June 22-26

U.S. National Doubles Championships
Rocky Mountain Health Club, Cheyenne, WY, Oct. 24-27

Dee & Roberts Nominated Outstanding AARA Athletes

At the end of each year, THE OLYMPIAN MAGAZINE, published by the United States Olympic Committee, selects the SportsMan and SportsWoman of the Year.

Though not yet a full-fledged Olympic sport, racquetball was granted Group C membership by the USOC in 1982, and this year has been invited to submit its outstanding athletes for consideration among all the sports recognized by the USOC.

Alpine skier Tamara McKinney, Lexington, KY, and archer Rick McKinney, Glendale, AZ received their respective awards among all the athletes named in 1983. (They are not related.)

Following is a synopsis of the male and female athletes selected this year by the American Amateur Racquetball Association. The text is by Ian Michaels, free-lance writer.

MARY DEE

For several years, Mary Emmett Dee physically possessed the elements to become a winner in racquetball. And from time-to-time, she did win. However, between fighting off injuries and working on her mechanics, Dee couldn't put it together.

"Everybody kept asking me 'Why don't you beat those players?'"

Somewhat doubtful of her abilities, the comment kept running through her mind.

After hours of viewing the professionals in person and on ESPN, she discovered what the victors had in common. In fact, she often was able to pre-select the winners during warm-up or early in the game. Mentally and emotionally, they were prepared and made adjustments when needed.

Welcome 1984 — when Dee's physical attributes were joined by a positive mental attitude and the ability to be intense or relax during a match.

The 29-year-old resident of Weare, NH pulled it all together well enough to capture a string of 18 consecutive tournaments, including the Lite/AARA Regional Championships and Ektelon Regionals. She was third in this year's prestigious American Amateur Racquetball Association U.S. National Singles and finished second in the National Ektelon event.

The crowning achievement for the folksy, curly-haired University of Vermont grad was her number one finish in the individual competition during the International Amateur Racquetball Federation (IARF) World Championships in Sacramento, CA in July. She was a member of Team USA which was undefeated in team competition against 11 other countries in the "Olympics of Racquetball."

The 5'6", 132 pound Dee tucked away her perpetual ear-to-ear grin long enough to defeat Pennsylvannian Cindy Baxter, Team USA captain, whom she hadn't beaten previously.

Dee, who has a degree in physical education, teaches racquetball and is Activities Coordinator at the Manchester (NH) Court Club. One of eight children, Dee hails from St. Louis, MO, the early Mecca of racquetball. Interestingly enough, however, she never played the sport until college.

Her victory in the IARF World Championships earned Dee a spot in World Games II which take place in late July, 1985, in London, England.

ANDY ROBERTS

Long before Andy Roberts won the AARA Intercollegiate Racquetball Championships and lead the Memphis State University to its eighth consecutive national team title this past April, everyone knew he was a force to be reckoned with.

Bearing the bespectacled good looks of a Clark Kent, the 6'3¾", 197 pound Roberts rips the ball so hard and low that certainly a strip search would reveal an "S" emblazoned on his chest. Surely, only the fabled Kryptonite would slow Roberts down.

Early in the spring he gunned it out with the other 15 best amateurs (many of whom have victories over touring professionals) selected for the East Coast Invitational Tournament in North Carolina and defeated Florida's Sergio Gonzales in the finals of the round-robin event.

Andrew Edward Roberts was so good that he was expected to win. His number one seeding in the American Amateur Racquetball National Juniors and number three seeding at the DP Nationals in June against the best of all ages proved it. Right?

Wrong. Roberts lost in the quarter-finals of both the Juniors, and at the DP Nationals, for the first time in his tournament life, he lost in the first round.

Emotion, be it anger or brashness, surfaced often on and off the court in the 19-year-old.

Roberts' junior title assured him a place on the Team USA that was to compete in the International Amateur Racquetball Federation (IARF) World Championships in July at Sacramento, just up the road from Los Angeles and the site of the Class A Olympic Sports.

But the sobering effect of the two early round defeats and the knowledge that he most likely would be only an alternate on the USA team took a bit of the tempest away from the antics of Roberts. His anger, he came to realize with the help of others, expended much needed energy. It was a cause rather than the effect of losing.

Because of a couple of late developments, Roberts' role went from alternate to the number one player on the men's teams.

Roberts displayed a newfound attitude, showed mettle uncharacteristic of a college sophomore and unleashed the talent all knew he had in his key position of the team that went undefeated against all comers from 11 other nations in the IARF World Championships.

Even the loss to Canada's Ross Harvey in the finals of the men's individual championship failed to dim the brightness that Roberts displayed. Roberts and



Mary Dee: Positive mental attitude pays off.



Andy Roberts: Controlling rather than being controlled.

Harvey, a former professional, played to a standstill, splitting games in a match that was decided by a 15-14 tiebreaker.

He had helped his team, and most importantly, Roberts learned to relax. Gone was the yelling, screaming, and venting of anger against the referee.

"I was taking it too seriously . . . getting frustrated and bang the racquet (against the wall)," said the pre-law student. He is attending the Tennessee University on an athletic scholarship for racquetball.

Of course, Roberts still wants to win and he admits to some anger after a defeat, but the three-sport letterman from Christian Brothers High School in Memphis does the controlling rather than being controlled.

The youngest of four boys, Roberts is a world class competitor who will have a chance to show his class in the World Games II in London next summer as a result of his play in Sacramento. Individual finalists automatically qualified for berths in England.

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