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CONTENTS

Advanced Instruction Guide



November 1981

Vol. 4, No. 11

FEATURES/INSTRUCTION

9 ADVANCED INSTRUCTION GUIDE

10 How to Tell If You Are An Advanced Player by Mark Kessinger

12 Warming Up/Cooling Down by Jack Reznik

18 Quick-Draw Forehand by Marty Hogan

21 The Science of Serving by Lynn Adams

23 Advanced Stroke Problems by Shannon Wright with Steve Keeley

30 Rounding Out An Advanced Game by Charles Garfinkel

32 How A Lefty Can Beat A Righty by Craig McCoy

35 How To Beat The Big Man And The Little Man by Lindsay Myers

38 WHATEVER HAPPENED TO CHARLIE BRUMFIELD? After years on top, The Professor now finds himself sliding downhill. By Rick Davis

44 A SPECIAL SPORT FOR A SPECIAL BUNCH OF ATHLETES Racquetball makes its mark in the Special Olympics. By Barry Colman

46 SERVING UP RACQUETBALL DISHES Actor-gourmet cook Brian Mitchell offers a special yogurt menu for players. By Denis Yaro

48 NOTHING STANDS IN HER WAY Actress Pamela Sue Martin has a "clear and determined" approach to her career and to racquetball. By Michele Kort

DEPARTMENTS

4 Up Front

5 Side Out

6 Players

41 Rx For Winning—Acupressure and Body Balancing

53 Short Shots

54 Club News

56 Tournaments

62 Off The Wall

Cover photo by David M. King

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UP FRONT



Coming Attractions

A friend of mine once told me a story about the success of a nightclub. The owner opened a club that became so popular, people were standing in line waiting to get in. After a year and a half of success in which the club became the hit of the local scene, the owner abruptly closed up shop and opened another club with another name two blocks down the road. When my friend asked him why, he said, "People get tired of the same thing. You have to change the environment for people or you will lose them." His new club was also a success.

Because we feel that change is important to the growth of our publication, and that stagnation prevents creative juices from flowing, *Racquetball Illustrated* will be initiating some changes beginning in the January issue.

Since we are very satisfied with our product, the changes will not be monumental. Basically, we will be adding a few things, eliminating some others, and modifying our celebrity cover policy.

One addition will be a regular column titled "Court Memories" in which players or friends or opponents of those players recall interesting anecdotes from the past. We don't want to preview all the "oldie but moldy" stories that we will be printing but take our word for it, some people have some unusual tales to tell.

Another new feature will be "Serve/Return" in which interested parties will have a no-holds barred opportunity to express a viewpoint on a particular, and probably controversial, subject. This will be a point/counterpoint forum. Both viewpoints will be expressed on a given subject.

We are not sure how often this column will run because we are not sure how many people have the grit to take a stand on a subject.

We will also be adding a new products section titled "Service Box" in which industry people will have a chance to preview what they will be offering in the future. All too often, this column is nothing more than a plug for some company, but we hope to make it more consumer oriented. That is why suggested retail price must accompany all material sent us. We also reserve the right to eliminate products which are, in fact, not new. The section is designed to preview things, not give more exposure to old products that aren't selling well.

We have also revised our "Fashion Rac" section. Beginning this issue there will be no monthly fashion section. It will now run seasonally, three or four times a year. In the past, we would focus on one sportswear company and run a two-page spread on its line. From now on, we will highlight only one or two outfits from three or four different companies.

We will also be adding more color to our pages with an emphasis on tournament action and illustrations that lead into a feature story.

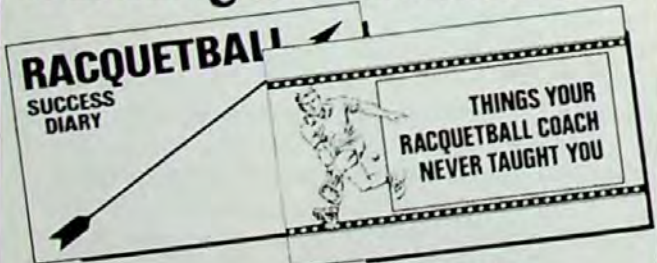
Our cover policy will also be modified during 1982. In 1981, out of 12 issues, celebrities will take up 10 covers, while professional players will be featured on only two. Next year, it will probably be more evenly balanced, or with a slight leaning toward the professional players.

There will be other changes as the year goes on and we will announce those as we introduce them. As we said, change is important to growth, and as we enter another year of publication, we invite you to grow with us.

Ben Kalb

Ben Kalb

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SIDE OUT

Nationals

I just want to congratulate you for the excellent story and photos on the Nationals.

The way you handled the story was excellent. I thought I was reading an article in *Sports Illustrated*, not *Racquetball Illustrated*.

I have just finished reading another racquetball publication, and the story in that one made no mention of the controversial incidents that happened at the tournament. Were they at the same tournament you attended?

Arthur P. Harris
San Diego, Calif.

Instruction

I am glad to see you are paying more attention to instruction and pros and less attention to celebrities.

Your September issue was the best I have read. The story on the Nationals was worth reading as was the article on the search for real amateurs.

But what I enjoyed most was the instruction on Hogan. It was interesting to read Hogan's opinions of himself and it was even better to read how other players try and beat him. He's still the king.

Joann Wilkens
Charlotte, N.C.

Referees

I noticed the article in your September issue on "How To Handle Referees" by Lindsay Myers.

Isn't this the same Lindsay Myers who spends half his matches arguing with the refs? He is probably the wrong authority to be writing such an article.

In the end, the best way to "handle" a referee is to be a gentleman on the court.

Walter Bergman
Los Angeles, Calif.

Sex

Interesting story on "Sex Before Racquetball" in your September issue.

With a title like that, one would think this would be one of those sexist, exploitive stories one might find in girlie magazines.

But it was done with taste and was well worth reading.

Sandra Hawkins
Dallas, Tex.

September Issue

I would like to compliment you on your September issue. The pictures and the story on the Nationals were great, especially the

photos which showed a lot of action and emotion. It was a fabulous article.

Diane Roehe
Danbury, Conn.

Senior Citizens

While in Hawaii I picked up a copy of *Racquetball Illustrated* to read and enjoy. What I especially enjoyed was the "Up Front" column on Second Class Citizens (August 1981).

I certainly agree that they push senior citizens into corners in many respects. I am 63 and I play nearly every day.

I am a C or low B player and I play girls 30-40 years younger than me. It could discourage me but it doesn't concern me. I realize I never will be the best but I am having the best time of my life.

At first I was embarrassed to be seen in the club for fear someone would laugh at me. Now the club is a vital part of my life and I have made many friends.

What more can I ask for out of life? The best Sundays I've ever had are when I am playing doubles with my kids and grandson.

Eleanor Quackenbush
Salem, Ore.

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PLAYERS



Rad Daly (*Bad News Bears*) plays exhibition with touring pro Bret Harnett.

Photo by Milo Muslin



Bruce Weitz (*Hill Street Blues*)



Melissa Gilbert (*Little House On The Prairie*) and Danielle Brisebois (*Archie Bunker's Place*).



Photos by Craig Grimes

Phillip McKeon (Alice)

Actress Connie Stevens

Several television and movie celebrities turned out for the first Connie Stevens Celebrity Sports Fair at Racquetball World in Canoga Park, Calif.

The one-day event was for the benefit of the Jeffrey Foundation, a Los Angeles-based facility which serves the educational, recreational and social needs of severely handicapped and mentally retarded youngsters from ages two to 21.

In addition to the racquetball event, celebrities participated in swimming and water polo exhibitions, roller skating races and even a backgammon tournament.





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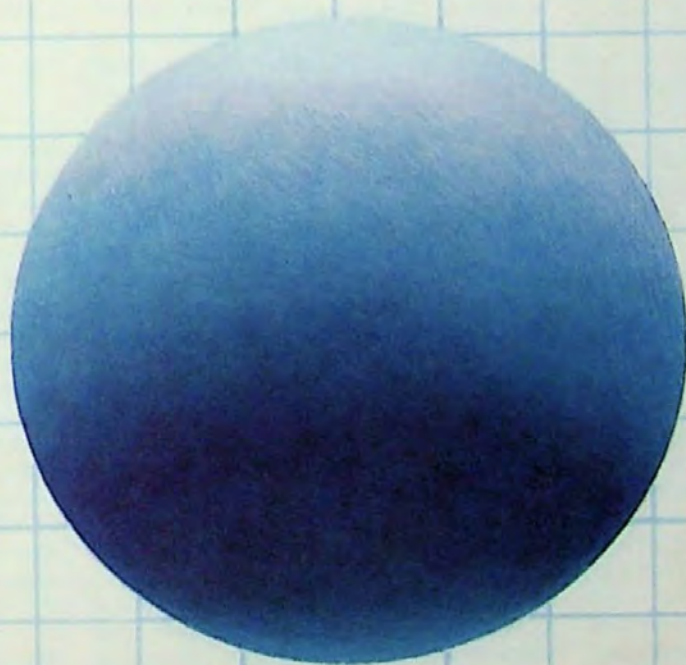
Advanced Instruction Guide

10
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By Charles Garfinkel

32
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A Righty**
By Craig McCoy

35
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Advanced Instruction Guide

HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE AN ADVANCED PLAYER

By Mark Kessinger

People are always interested in how they rate in racquetball performance compared to others. In fact, it is one of the hottest topics of discussion in any club in the country.

From time to time one may find oneself comparing apples and oranges, that is, comparing C players and B players. Then voices rise again over whether so-and-so is actually a C player or not.

At tournament time, the issue springs to the foreground of debate. No one wants to be outclassed by playing in the wrong division, and idealistically, a player should not be allowed to sandbag (play in a lower division).

Every club hosting a tournament will have its own criteria for skill levels, most of them based on what a player has done in previous tournaments. But for purposes of self-instruction and improvement, the levels of play can actually be categorized and described fully enough so that each player can diagnose his or her own level.

By recognizing your playing traits, shot selection, and type of strategy, you can determine what level of play you have reached. Once that is done, you can focus on those skills which need to be mastered before graduating to a higher level of play.

We all know the name of the person who has never tried racquetball: the beginner. And we know what that player looks and plays like because at one time we were all beginners. With practice, determination, and a few tips, we inched our way into the novice category.

The novice is the colt who has gained his legs for the first time: wobbly and unsure. When the novice swings at the ball, he may miss it as often as he hits it. Misjudging the ball is a common error that often makes the novice overrun the ball he's trying to return.

For the novice, gaining skill involves plenty of practice time on the court. Becoming accustomed to the speed of the ball and the angles off the walls are something that comes only through experience.

Being a C player is infinitely more comfortable. The C player begins to think about how to choose the correct return. The C player no longer sees himself as a victim of a wild, crazy game. He begins to learn strategy.

The B player is a fairly tough player. He has mastered most of the strokes and shots and can even show you a trick or two during an actual game. His mistakes are usually ones of strategy.

The A-level player is the one whom we seek out to learn from. He has pretty much learned all the aspects of the game and can execute them the way they should be executed.

Our perception of the game determines our strategy and defines our level of play more accurately than our physical skills. The famous psychologist Jean Piaget says individuals move through stages of development as their personality matures. The same is seemingly true for the development of our sport skills. There are levels of skills and concepts that each player must master as his game matures.

The theory of regression works in racquetball just as it does in the theories of personality development: each stage or level must be mastered before you can successfully move on. If not, then the player is doomed to eventually return to those skills he skimmed over, and learn them more thoroughly.

Picture, for example, a B player with a weak backhand. His opponents will spot this weakness and use it against him every chance they have. While he was in the C division, he compensated for his weak backhand with extra hustle. But against the other B players, this weakness becomes such a handicap that it will cause him to lose every game. He is doomed to return to the previous skill level and sharpen his backhand until it is on a par with the rest of his skills.

Progress in acquiring racquetball skills has to be a complete, steady mastering of each level. You cannot avoid being a beginner unless you have equivalent skills from another racquet sport. Then you may start out as a novice.

Each level paves the way for the next. The basics are first, and each skill builds on that set of basics. There are no shortcuts.

By looking at the characteristics of different levels and the skills involved, you can see where you stand in relation to everyone else, and how to improve from there.

The beginning player has almost no conception of the game at all. He is new to the sport, equipment, rules and goals of the game. He may have watched others play and

acquired a feel for the game along with his enthusiasm for it. But his skill level is raw.

The beginning stage will determine the future of your racquetball career and decide just how much enthusiasm you have for the sport. Mastering the basics is crucial to becoming a better player. Those players who seem to be stuck at one stage in their game may well look to weak points in their basic skills as the root of other weaknesses. For example, a weak backhand will not only cause you to skip returns, but when you try to compensate for it, you will end up with poor court position.

The beginning player must learn to predict the movement of the ball and calculate a good spot at which to return it. This is the fundamental skill of anticipation. Good contact with the ball is impossible when the ball is out of reach. As the three-dimensional billiard-like angles become better known to players, there is less reaching, jumping, diving and running.

Once the player has learned to intercept the ball rather than chase it around the court, he may begin to work properly on body position, stroke mechanics and eye-hand coordination. He has now graduated to the novice level.

By now the novice has spent enough time on the court hitting the ball and being victimized by the variety of angles off the wall that he will know just about where the ball will end up. He no longer meets the ball by accident, batting away at it by reflex. He arrives at a good court position ahead of the ball and takes a swing at it as it passes through his hitting zone.

Almost unconsciously he begins to position himself in relation to the ball he is hitting. Now his shots become more consistent and successful, and he makes impact with the ball with a solid hit. The perception of the novice is still focused on the racquet meeting the ball. Not much thought is given to a direction of the shot other than "towards the front wall."

After so many thousands of correct contacts, the player begins to learn which angle of stroke will produce which series of rebounds. He will see that hitting the ball early or late in the hitting zone will determine the amount of angle. When he begins to tell himself with a certain amount of pride, "Hey, I

made the correct shot," he has become a C player.

The C player begins to shift his focus from the simple contact of the ball to the entire court, shooting around his opponent, and towards certain exact sections of the front court. The C player is working on certain shots he has learned to aim and control. He has learned to hit into the corners for a pinch, straight into the wall for a pass shot and so on.

Soon the C player is choosing specific spots on the front wall, and can pinch the ball by shooting it into the side wall first. He also begins to take the rest of the court into consideration, knowing that his pass shots die in the back court if they hit the side wall rather than bouncing straight off the back for a plum. This is the beginning of shot repertoire and strategy. Strategy, simply stated, is choosing the best shot for the situation.

The pass shot works best when your opponent is in the forecourt, while the pinch is used primarily when your opponent is playing too far back. The C player begins to choose and execute these shots consistently, has fewer faults on the serve, and has a variety of different serves to use.

One other interesting thing appears when the player reaches the C level: A backhand shot begins to develop. The C player no longer tries to get every shot on his forehand side or tries to blast those backhand shots off the back wall with a forehand.

Instead of hitting the ball at any height, the C player tries to make each shot at waist level or lower, with the knee level being most effective for him. This shows enough anticipation to be in the right spot enough in advance to wait for the ball. He is also beginning to become confident that he can make the shot happen.

Knowing where the ball is headed is the novice level of anticipation. For the C player, anticipation means knowing where it is headed, how fast it is traveling and how high it is traveling. This knowledge allows the player to choose an appropriate shot and to execute it in the short response time demanded. However, if an error in judgment occurs, the C player has learned his stroke mechanics and body position well enough to allow for last-second adjustments. He may not hit a perfect shot but he is likely to "save" the ball.

The arsenal of the C player includes lobs, dinks, z-serves, pass shots, and pinches. The kill shots happen more often and look less and less accidental.

As the player begins to progress out of the C level, he may begin to notice some grace in his movements. Practice and experience has given him control of his movement and each action tends to be performed more efficiently. Progress in learning the basics has begun to

show up as style and agility.

Private instruction can be very helpful at this point. It is important that any bad habits be identified and eliminated from your game. A more skilled instructor can pick out the flaws in your game that you have failed to see. Bad habits at this stage in the game generate many unwanted effects, including physical damage or stress. Failure to master the basics limits your future playing and sooner or later you will have to "regress."

The advanced C player is more aware of his opponent, his position and his motion. Anticipation expands now to include the opponent. He is more than an obstacle. He is another factor the player must consider when selecting his shot.

"The A players possess skills that are not obvious to the rest of the playing public."

Being aware of your opponent and the shot to use against him is effective strategy and comes from conceptualizing the game more clearly. No longer absorbed in how to meet and hit the ball, the C player is able to concern himself with other factors. One of these factors is the development of a clearer picture of what is happening during the game, a "third-eye" perspective, which allows you to visualize the court. Like a war-room map, you have noted your position, speed and direction in relation to your opponent's position and the ball. This quantum leap in strategic thinking serves to thrust you into the next level of skill.

The B player spends less time getting in place and setting up for the shot. You begin to swing at the last possible moment for good contact, striking the ball closer to the floor for a more accurate shot. This advanced set up allows you to relax, assess the situation and contact the ball smoothly. You avoid telegraphing or giving away your intentions because you don't want to help your opponent's strategy. As you make your opponent wait for the shot and you utilize all the time you have, you begin to control the game.

One identifying characteristic of the B player is a preoccupation with power. The harder

the ball is hit, the tougher it is to play and the more intimidating your game. This can work against you if your control is not honed as sharply as your power.

High powered shots can become high powered mistakes, caroming around the court, forcing you out of position and giving your opponent his choice of shots. As a rule, each shot hit hard is effective only because it was also well-executed. Accuracy is always more important than power. It is similar to learning to drive a car. At 100 m.p.h., one mistake will be your last.

The good player learns control first and increases his power only as long as he maintains control. It is easier to speed up an accurate shot than it is to gain control over a powerful but wild stroke. At the A level, the player will finally learn to merge that power with the other elements of the game so that each shot is effective, not just powerful.

The B player must concentrate on shot selection. There should be no shot with which he is unfamiliar, and each set up should allow him three or four shots to choose from. The B player works on making that choice under the pressure of a highly competitive match.

The B player is more serve-conscious, knowing that each ace on the serve is a point that saves him extra work, and one that demoralizes his opponent.

The B player is prepared for long rallies, perhaps trading ceiling shots until fatigue or bad judgment forces an error.

During the set up, the B player relaxes, and even appears confident in putting away a plum despite his opponent being 10 points ahead.

The B player is no longer vulnerable in the areas of basic skill. He is fast, agile and has a varied shot selection. He has stamina, is aggressive, covers the court well and isn't easily fooled. He is consistent, confident, waits for set ups, takes advantage of mistakes, and notes the strengths and weaknesses of his foe.

So what does an A player have that the B player doesn't?

Besides more points, the A player possesses a few skills that are not as obvious to the playing public. Skill refinement is the main difference between the A and B players.

The A player strives for excellent strategy, anticipation and accuracy under tough and varied conditions. The change in perception of the game is subtle.

The A player increases his anticipation to pick up the speed of the game to its fastest pace. The difference between human speed and the speed of the ball can only be made up through anticipation.

When the A player watches his opponent set up for a return, he observes the stance,

HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE AN ADVANCED PLAYER

swing, position and amount of power, and then cross-checks that information with the opponent's strengths, ability and habits. An accurate prediction of his opponent's shot selection is being made before contact with the ball. In doing so, the A player moves to a good court position even as the return travels toward the front wall. By this time, the player has rechecked his anticipation and is making corrections or refinements. As the ball bounds off the front wall the A player is set up and waiting, revising his shot selection as he observes the ball and his opponent's movement.

The fast, accurate shots of the A level player make each flaw in the opponent into a blatant handicap. A player who is over-committed in position, or who is slow to recover after a shot, will find himself hustling to make up for his mistakes.

In selecting the right shot for the right situation, the A player has the ability to revise his intentions as the ball and opponent change positions on the court.

The A player adds deception to hurt the other player's anticipation. Off-beat shots can yield an unexpected advantage. Setting up for an obvious shot and then choosing another, allows the opponent's anticipation to work against him.

What you end up with is a three dimensional chess game with a micro-second time limit on moves. The rally may not be won by a particular shot, but by a series of shots planned in advance, and designed to force your opponent into an error or into making a predictable shot which is suddenly cut off. The A level is open ended. We are still seeing new techniques and strategies to introduce.

The progression through the different levels of play can take anywhere from a year to several years, depending on the skill, physical condition, discipline, amount of practice time and the level of competition available. Not everyone will be an A player or needs to be. The fun and fitness benefits of the game are just as high for a C player as they are for an A player.

The descriptions given are not exclusive to that level; nothing is cut and dried. Each player probably has skills from two different levels, but most players will be able to recognize the level that describes their game best.

As you work at improving your game, pay attention to mastering all the techniques of that level. Skipping a particular skill will cause you problems later that will frustrate your game and leave you in a rut unless you return to that skill and master it.

With a good foundation of basics, you will naturally progress from one skill level to the next. Practice, seek instruction and watch for the road signs along the way.



Advanced Instruction Guide

WARMING UP/ COOLING DOWN

By Jack Reznik

Editor's note: The author is an associate professor of physical education at Louisiana State University. He has written three racquetball instructional books.

As a serious tournament competitor or even a not-so-serious weekend warrior, you may have often wondered whether or not you should warm up prior to playing a racquetball game. After all, in the past, haven't world records been broken by individuals who did very little or no warm ups?

Exercise physiologists have wrestled with this question, as evidenced by the mass of studies conducted to prove or disprove the benefits of warming up prior to engaging in vigorous or strenuous exercise or competition.

Some of these studies indicate that warming up before competing does not result in a significant increase in athletic performance. But most other studies have shown that warming up does in fact contribute significantly toward improving physical performance. Researchers have discovered that a proper warm up increases your flexibility and stretches the muscles to their maximum, reducing the number and severity of pulls and tears which can occur while participating in a strenuous activity or exercise. This is especially significant to those players who only play on weekends or those players who are getting up there in years. Maintaining your flexibility helps to prevent many of the aches and pains so common with advancing age.

During a warm up, various changes take place within the working muscles which also enhance performance. The temperature of the muscle increases and the viscosity is reduced, causing it to become more fluid-like. This enables the muscles to contract more quickly and develop a greater force at a given velocity. For the racquetball player, this may mean added power in shot performance.

Not only the muscles used in swinging the racquet or running to reach the ball need to be warmed up, but the heart muscle must be readied for competition as well. Several studies have shown that young and old individuals (ages 21-52) demonstrated electrocardio-

graphic (EKG) abnormalities when performing a strenuous task without an adequate warm up. It was also shown that when these same subjects warmed up by jogging before performing this same strenuous task, the EKG abnormalities were either eliminated or reduced in nearly every case. The warm up session allows time for the heart muscles to adjust themselves to the greater demands of strenuous exercise, leading to an increase in both blood flow and oxygen delivery.

How to Warm Up

Although the values of warming up have been known for many years, the correct way to obtain maximum flexibility was not commonly known. To obtain optimal flexibility safely, you should engage in a well-rounded program of "static" stretching exercises. This method is preferred over "dynamic" or bouncing-type stretching. It permits the muscle and tendon groups being exercised to be safely stretched by applying force gradually. This procedure of slow and steady stretching results in less muscle soreness and strain. It also guards against overstretching, takes less energy to perform and is less likely to cause post-game muscle soreness.

To start your pre-game warm up, first stretch the muscle and tendon groups you will be using during play. Next, activate your circulatory system by performing a few calisthenic exercises followed by walking at a steady pace or by jogging slowly at first and then with an increasing tempo.

When performing the stretching exercises, you should avoid sudden or forceful movements. Apply the stretch slowly until you reach a point of slight discomfort. At this point you will perceive a feeling of tightness or a slight burning or pulling sensation. Hold this position for a short time, about 10 to 15 seconds and then release. Rest for approximately the same amount of time and then resume the same stretch. Repeat each stretch at least three times. This routine will result in a minimum of a half-minute of sustained stretching for each muscle and tendon group.

The last part of the warm up consists of hitting the ball easily at first and then gradually increasing the tempo. During this final phase, you should perform all the different shots and serves you intend to use during the game/match. This includes pinches, ceiling

balls, backwall play, etc., and the drive cross-court, lob, z, and garbage serves. Practice whatever is in your arsenal, especially the shots you expect to use most often against your opponent.

As with any warm up, you can vary your routine as to the intensity, duration, rest, number of repetitions and types of exercises. The amount of warm up you do is up to you because only you know what your own capa-

city and needs are. A word of caution: Be very careful when warming up so you do not make your warm up your workout. Do not leave your game in the locker room.

Warm Up Exercises

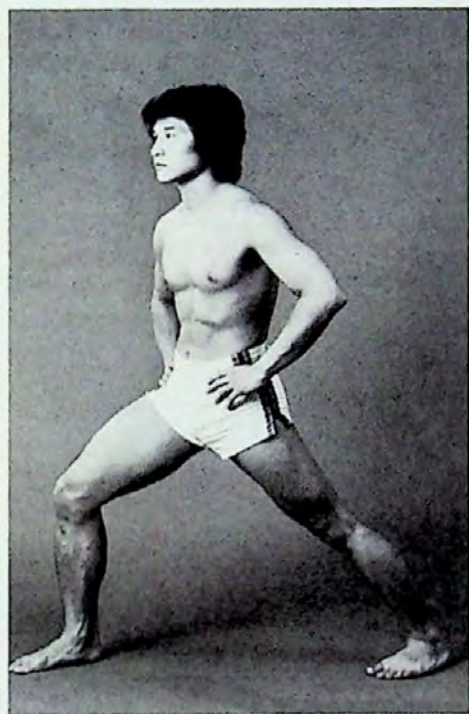
There are many different kinds of stretching exercises you can perform to help you warm up for and cool down after a racquetball

match. The following exercises can be used as a general routine for a pre-game warm up or after-game cool down. Other exercises can be included or substituted as the need arises.

If you find that your flexibility is not adequate, then you may need to become involved in a more extensive stretching program.

Do these exercises daily and you will find a marked increase in your flexibility.

1. LOWER BACK OF THE LEG STRETCH (Calf Muscle & Achilles Tendon)



START:

Stand erect with your hands on your hips.

ACTION:

Step forward with one leg and place it on the floor. Next, slowly move your hips forward until you feel the stretch. Hold this position for several seconds and then return to the starting position. Repeat this same exercise with the opposite leg. Throughout the exercise keep the back leg straight. To create an additional stretch, bend the knee of the back leg.

HINTS:

Keep both feet on the floor and the toes pointing straight ahead.

2. SITTING HAMSTRING STRETCH (Also Stretches Lower Back)



START:

Sit on the floor with your legs together and straight. Your toes should point up.

ACTION:

Slowly bend forward at your waist and at the same time move your arms toward your toes. When you feel the stretch, hold this position for several seconds and then return to the starting position. If your back is tight, you will feel some stretch in that area of your body.

HINTS:

Keep your back straight. Do not bend your head.

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WARMING UP/ COOLING DOWN

3. GROIN STRETCH



START:
Sit on the floor with your legs spread comfortably apart.

ACTION:
Gradually move forward at your waist. When you feel the stretch, hold for several

seconds and then return to the starting position.

HINTS:
Keep your back straight as you lean and your hands in front of you for balance.

4. QUADRICEPS STRETCH



START:
Stand with your arms at your sides.

ACTION:
Bend one knee and grasp the ankle of this leg behind your body. Pull slowly upwards on this leg towards your buttocks and at the same time lean slightly forward. When you feel the stretch, hold for several seconds and then return to the starting position. Repeat this same exercise with the opposite leg.

HINTS:
Do not jerk the leg as you pull it towards you. Hold on to something with your other hand if necessary to maintain your balance.

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WARMING UP/COOLING DOWN

5. LOWER BACK STRETCH



START:

Lie on the floor on your back with your arms beside you palms down.

ACTION:

Raise both legs simultaneously off the ground over your head and trunk until they are parallel to the floor. Hold this position for several seconds and then return to the supine position.

HINTS:

Move into this position gradually. Keep your knees straight throughout the entire exercise.

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6. WRIST AND FOREARM STRETCH



START:

Assume a kneeling position with the palms of your hands on the floor and the fingers pointing toward your knees. Support your weight on both your hands and knees.

ACTION:

Lead slightly backwards until you can feel

the stretch in the front part of your forearms. Hold this position for several seconds and then move forward to the starting position.

HINTS:

Keep the palms of your hands flat on the floor as you lean backwards.

7. SHOULDER STRETCH



START:

Stand erect with your hands at your sides.

ACTION:

Raise your right arm up and over your right shoulder. At the same time move your left hand behind your back. Next, move both hands toward each other until you can grasp them. If you cannot clasp your hands, then you can use a towel. When you feel the stretch, hold for several seconds and then return to the starting position. Then reverse the hand position and repeat the same exercise on the opposite side.

HINTS:

Do not force the stretch. Use a towel to complete the exercise if necessary. You do not have to clasp your hands together for this exercise to be effective.

8. NECK STRETCH



START:

Sit or stand in a comfortable position.

ACTION:

Very slowly, move your neck in a circular pattern.

HINTS:

As you move your neck, you can stop in any position and hold the stretch for a few seconds before continuing the movement. Avoid this exercise if you have a neck injury.

CALISTHENIC EXERCISES

Listed below are several calisthenic exercises that you can incorporate in your warm up program. These should follow the static flexibility exercises.

1. Sit-ups (bent knee, 10 - 15)
2. Push-ups (5 - 10)
3. Jumping Rope (30 seconds)
4. Running in place (30 seconds)

WARMING UP/ COOLING DOWN

Cooling Down

The cool-down period, sometimes referred to as warm down, is the third phase of the workout. It is the tapering-off period in which you continue to exercise your body at a decreasing intensity **following** play. This phase is as important as the warm up and should not be neglected. The cool down should be an integral part of your racquetball play and done faithfully after each match.

Cooling down after a racquetball match allows your body systems to gradually adjust to their normal resting state. During play, the heart pumps blood to the muscles at an increased rate. After you stop playing, the blood has to be diverted back to its normal circulation pattern, i.e., the one it maintains when your body is resting.

The shift from strenuous activity to a resting state should not be abrupt. The tapering off process takes time, about six to 10 minutes. Stopping suddenly after a vigorous match causes the blood to pool in the muscles, especially in the legs. This occurs because the muscles no longer contract and return the blood to the heart at the same rate as during play. Since an insufficient supply of blood and oxygen will be available for the heart and other organs of your body, light-headedness, dizziness, nausea, and even fainting may result. Stepping immediately into a hot shower, sauna, or whirlpool bath following a vigorous match or workout will also reduce the flow of blood in circulation.

The cool-down process also hastens recovery by getting rid of the accumulated metabolic wastes in the muscles at a much faster rate. This eases muscle aches and makes cramping less likely to occur.

Begin cooling down your body as soon as your match is completed. First, walk at a slow and leisurely pace for several minutes around the court or up and down the hallway outside the court. This is followed by a short session of stretching exercises, which should be done by all racquetball players, regardless of skill or age. The same stretching exercises previously discussed for warming up can also be used for cooling down.

Approximately six to eight minutes after the completion of your match, check your heart rate. Your pulse should be within 20 beats of your pre-exercise heart rate or below 100. If not, continue the cooling down process until it reaches this level. Remember, the key to cooling the body down after a strenuous match or workout is to taper off slowly.



Advanced Instruction Guide

THE QUICK DRAW FOREHAND

By Marty Hogan

Now that I have established in my last two articles that power racquetball is here to stay, it's time to look at some fundamental principles. And what better way to discuss them than in the most critical situations in which a player doesn't have time to set up for a picture-perfect power shot.

Those situations arise when you are up against the side wall and your opponent jams the ball at you, or in the middle of a center court slugout, or when the ball just decides to take a bad bounce. Most players in those situations either pitty-pat the ball back or hit it somewhere, anywhere, just to get it back into play. But advanced players know better than that. They dig out from their bag of tricks a rapid fire shot which goes invariably for a winner. Since the quick draw forehand is easier to hit than the backhand, we'll start with that shot and reserve the backhand and other specialty shots for later discussion.

Basic Principles

There are four main factors involved in hitting a quick draw forehand: flexible wrist action, good contact point, whip-like arm motion, and controlled weight transfer.

Flexible wrist action is the most important part of the shot. If necessary, you can drive or kill a normal shot with a moderately stiff wrist, but there's no way you can react fast enough to a blazing fast shot with slow, stiff, weak wrist action. You need the wrist to adjust for any timing problems caused by the rest of the swing or to generate power when you can't transfer enough weight toward the target area.

The contact point can be much deeper than called for in the classical forehand. In fact, a quick forehand can be hit with lots of pace even when the ball is behind the body. Because the contact point is deep in the stance, you will have more time to react to the ball than when you try to contact the ball closer to the instep of the left leg as in the classic forehand.

You also will need to learn how to react to the ball with one continuous whipping arm motion, rather than a jerky one. Swinging by the numbers is the worst possible way to try to hit a rapid fire forehand. Swinging by the



With a quick-draw forehand you only have time to react, not to set up. Therefore, often times you will be facing the front wall. This is where wrist, and weight transfer come into play.

numbers tightens up players rather than allowing them to stay loose. The result is paralysis when the pressure mounts in quick reaction situations.

Finally, even under very severe time limitations, some weight transfer toward the target area can add enough speed to the ball to make the shot a winner rather than just a dink. A tremendous amount of ball speed can be generated by combining just a few of these principles in a rapid fire forehand.

The rule of thumb is to hit the ball away from the other player, but as I will demonstrate later, there are certain situations in which the rule can be bent to give you an extra advantage in the long run. This has to do with the mental part of your game.

The principle of practice and more practice puts emphasis on flexibility, adaptiveness, and creativity. It's great to be able to calculate all sorts of trivial measures such as force and momentum, but those things are only good in locker room or bar talk with the guys. When you only have a split second to respond to a ball coming at 100 m.p.h., you have to react naturally and feel the shot, not think the shot. Practice should be centered around getting this "feel"—reacting comfortably to balls being shot at you.

The How

Let's look at some factors involved in how to hit the quick draw forehand. Along with the major factors of flexible wrist action, good contact point, whipping swing, and directed weight transfer, you also have to concentrate on footwork, grip, ball spin, and position recovery.

There's not much you can do about feet position if the ball is already on top of you. But the thing to remember is that you can still hit the ball pretty hard even with an open stance



Hogan's quick-draw arm motion is a whipping-like action, not a jerky "by the numbers" motion.

facing the front wall. You just have to learn how to stay calm without trying to get into the ideal position for every shot. Hit the ball within an open stance or in whatever stance you happen to be in at the time. But do it with an offensive purpose, not a defensive one. You'll notice that even with the feet parallel to the front wall, you can still turn your upper body almost parallel to the side wall. This movement in fact winds you up like a rubber band, ready to be unwound into the ball (i.e., rotating the upper body back parallel to the front wall).

If you do not have a chance to move, then I recommend moving the right foot away from



If you do not have a chance to move your body, Hogan recommends you move your right foot away from the approaching ball rather than stepping into it.

the approaching ball rather than stepping into the ball with the left foot. By beginning the swing during this turning motion, you'll be ready to meet the ball as soon or sometimes even before the right foot gets into place. This movement takes only a split second—just about the amount of time you'll have. Of course, if you have more time than this, you may want to move further away from the ball to contact it from a lower position.

What about grip? Although the top players will tell you they only use one or two grips, they really have probably five or six different grips, one or two of which are used when they have time to set up for a shot. Grip is only important when you are trying to hit with maximum efficiency. When you're jammed, go with what you have. The one-grip player has an advantage because his primary grip is always the same. The two-grip player is wise to choose one grip (backhand, forehand, or in between), which he can use in all cases except when he has the time to change his grip. But in either case, don't worry about the grip.

You can adjust the direction of the shot by modifying the wrist snap and sometimes the swing. But the wrist snap is the most important part of making a quick draw shot work. That's why it makes sense sometimes to practice hitting from off balance positions using irregular grips. It's not so much that you will want to practice those shots 100 times in a row, but you want to feel comfortable making fine adjustments with the wrist.

Ball spin is sometimes helpful but not in the tennis sense. I never purposely try to use spin for any advantage because it's more trouble than it's worth. A racquetball just doesn't react like a tennis ball. But if I'm jammed, and the ball gets behind me, I'll come over the ball from behind my right hip and put it into a corner or down the line. The purpose of the top spin is not deception but protection and control. If I use a regular flat shot with the ball that far behind my body, I'll either throw my shoulder out or send the ball sailing out of control. So the top spin is used in an effort to let me swing with full force but still be able to control where I want the ball to go. Remember, power players don't push the ball too often. It's bad for the image.

The last point I want to make is that the quick draw shot has to be followed up. Think in terms of offense. Even if the shot was a great one, the other player may still return it. Think ahead. Anticipate where your opponent's return will go and jump on it.

One other point about flexible wrist action: The wrist snap is the last point in the sequence involved in hitting any shot. Once your motion starts for any shot, there's very

little adjustment you can make—except to modify the wrist snap. You must be able to feel the plane of the racquet face and with a few exceptions, snap the wrist in such a manner that the racquet face comes straight through the ball rather than over or under the ball. This means that you can hit a forehand with a backhand grip. The sooner you learn to hit every shot with lots of wrist snap, the sooner your wrist will be conditioned to make the adjustments mentioned here. Wrist adjustment isn't easy at first, so you'll have to build up to it. But if you start by consciously hitting all the basic shots with wrist snap, the transition from intermediate to advanced player will be much quicker.

Under "Basic Principles," I said that the contact point at times will be much deeper than you would expect. But in order to get maximum power, you have to pull back the arm and shoulder as far as it will go. Too often, the beginner will not bring the arm all the way back because of the misconception that if the ball takes a bad bounce or the ball isn't in a perfect position, the best way to adjust is by contacting the ball early. Nonsense. The wrist adjustment serves that purpose unless you misjudge the ball by a foot or more. Also, some players don't realize that they have not drawn the racquet back to its maximum possible position. You can tell if that position has been reached if the arm will not pivot any further when someone pushes on the shoulder.

The swing itself must be a fluid, whipping motion. Imagine yourself in your good old childhood days when you tried to snap someone with a towel. The motion is similar, although not identical, for a quick draw forehand. The difference is that the arm motion has to adjust to the height of the ball and the lack of time you have before contact.

Proper weight transfer is the third ingredient that is necessary to gain good velocity on the ball.

Even in an awkward body position, you should strive to start with the weight deep in your stance and then transfer it with your legs and hips in the direction of the intended shot. This motion may be as little as thrusting the knees about six inches toward the front wall to a full transfer of your hip weight from rear to front foot. This motion along with the uncoiling of the upper body should be sufficient to hit the ball with good pace. One major mistake is to make contact with the ball too late. The result is usually a ball which sails into the left wall. That's why the ball needs to be contacted deep in the stance so that the uncoiling motion, while in an open or irregular stance, transfers that part of the motion directed at the front wall. The follow-through in this case is just for balance.

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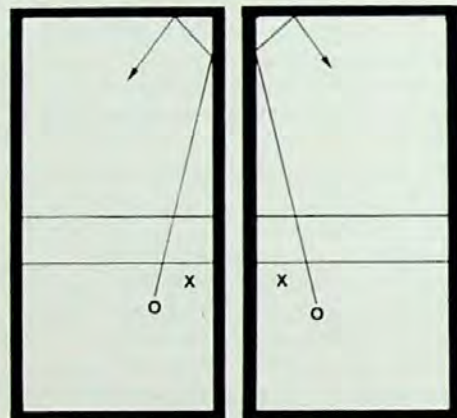
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THE QUICK DRAW FOREHAND

The Shots

Once you have some control over the quick draw forehand, you should still strive to put the ball in the best place. The easiest choice is to hit the ball where the other player isn't. This choice, as simple as it is, will always work to some extent, but there are some situations where other choices may be warranted.

A pinch shot is called for under two conditions. If the other player is caught between you and the side wall or he's in deep court, a pinch has the added psychological effect of demoralizing the opposition because he's helplessly frozen against the wall. This then opens the doors for less precise shots that you may have to or want to hit later in a match. The key is to "legally shove" the other player against the side wall.



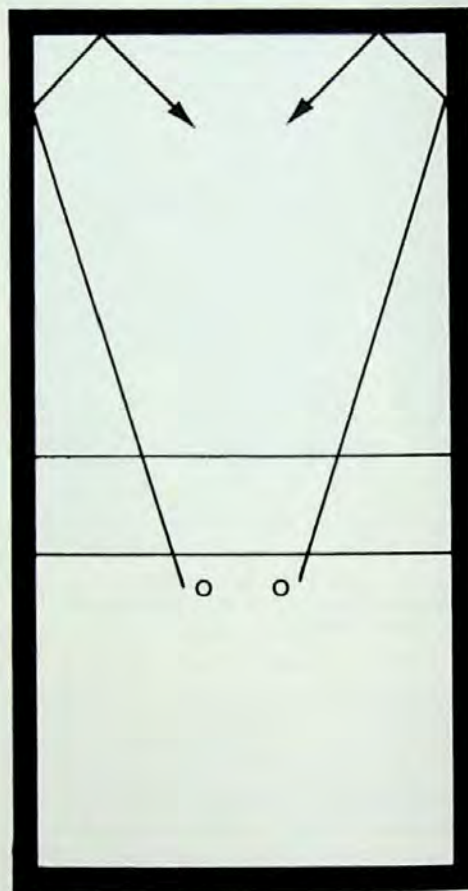
When the opponent is pinned against the wall, pinch shots are recommended.

Practice Drills

Practicing the quick draw shot can be dangerous because you start believing that every shot should be hit with the motion described earlier. But with that warning, I'll describe two drills which will make life a little more comfortable under quick draw situations.

In the first drill, you should stand facing the front wall behind the back service line and tap the ball to the front wall with the feet planted in the open stance. Get the feel of the deep contact point. Then after a few minutes, move closer to the front wall. Do this until you get to the front service line. Then move back and do the same thing but add more wrist and arm motion into the shot to pick up the pace. The final stage is to alternate between setting yourself up and whipping a forehand down the wall (with an open stance). If you have a partner, trade off setting the other person up with faster and faster shots. The ultimate shot is the pinch from this position.

In the second drill, alternate from side to side continuously hitting pinch shots from the back service line. Increase the tempo as your body loosens up. At first, concentrate individually on each separate point I've made, but stay loose. The most important things to try are wrist adjustment and the whipping motion. When it seems easy, try moving closer to the front wall.



A good drill is to alternate hitting forehand and backhand pinch shots. Concentrate on wrist adjustment and whipping motion.

Doubles games are excellent to test out what you've learned because you are often in close quarters slugging it out with three other players. The action is fast and the adrenalin is flowing.

The basic principles outlined here apply to both the forehand and the backhand. In fact they apply to all shots. You may not be able to follow every aspect of what I've described, but this should give you a glimpse of what is possible. As you become accustomed to hitting quick draw shots you can refine their execution. Then there will be a day when it will seem like old hat—the day when you've really entered the realm of the advanced player.

Advanced Instruction Guide

THE SCIENCE OF SERVING

By Lynn Adams

As serve execution is extremely important, anyone who wants to raise his or her level of play should spend a good amount of time perfecting his or her serve.

Before you go in and start banging the ball around from the service box, you need to be aware of the basic philosophy of the serve. Very simply, you want to hit a serve that sets up a weak return, so you can put the ball away on the next shot.

If you think about it, serving is the only time in a game situation where you are in total control of what happens. Only you know where you intend to serve the ball, how hard you're going to hit, at what height, etc. The receiver is at your mercy. So if you take that knowledge to heart, you don't ever want to walk into the service area and just put the ball in play. You decide what you're going to serve, why you want to hit that particular serve, and then concentrate on executing it correctly.

How do you use that to your optimum advantage? The best way is via your service motion. The only way the receiver can tell which direction your serve is going to go is by watching your body. Almost everyone telegraphs their serves by their service motions. Cheat your opponent of that knowledge by making every serve look the same.

Start by considering your beginning position. Everyone's is different, and you need to do whatever is most comfortable to you. But, whatever position you choose, always start your serves that way. Make sure you drop the ball in the same place every time, and that your step into the ball is in the same position every time.

In other words, your body moves exactly the same way every time you serve. Be deceptive. The biggest mistakes players make is to step more to the left with their front foot on a cross-court serve, and more to the right on a serve going straight. Only your wrist should be used to direct the movement of the ball.

There are three basic types of serves, with variations on each: the drive, the Z, and the lob. I will talk about each serve: how to hit it, different variations you can use, and the most effective way to practice it.

Although the drive is probably the easiest serve to attempt, it is one of the most difficult to execute properly. Everyone hits drive serves, but very few people hit them consistently.

The drive serve should be hit low and hard at an angle which just passes over the short line and goes straight to the back corner. It either dies in the corner or bounces twice before it reaches the back corner. It should never come off the backwall.

The body motion used to hit a drive serve is exactly like that used to hit a forehand. You will want to move into the ball by hitting it flat and parallel and with a snap of your wrist. The best trick for delivering good serves is to find your spot on the wall, that is, an area on the front wall that if hit will deliver an accurate serve. Everyone's spot is different, depending on how hard you hit the ball, what area you're delivering the serve from, how tall you are, etc. The only way to find your spot for drive serves is to get on a court and experiment.

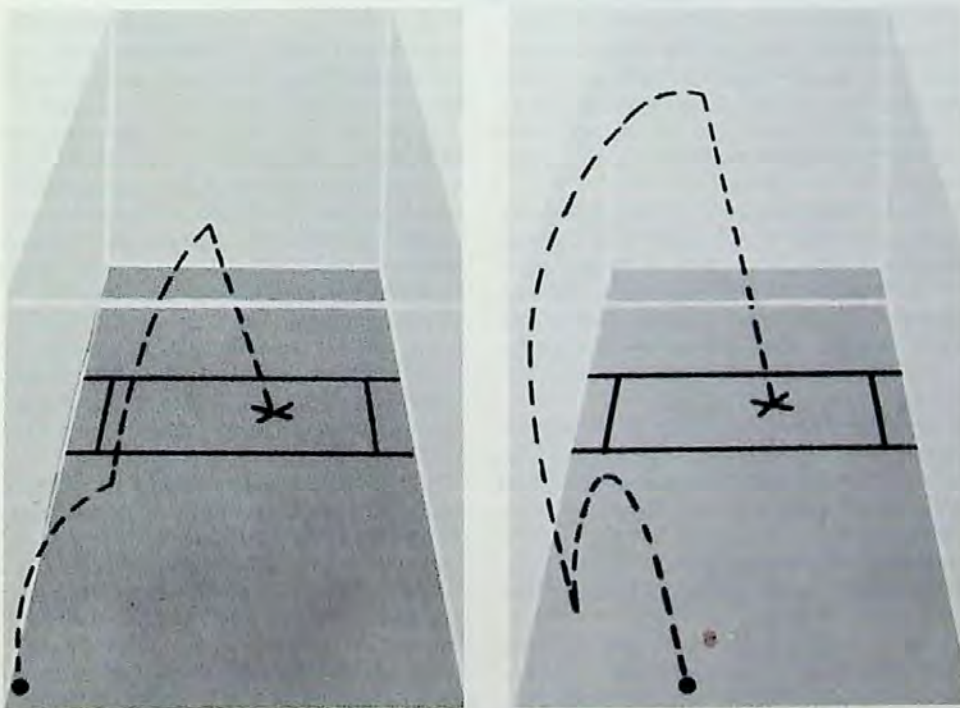
It helps to have someone with you so you can see where the ball goes in the backcourt, and to watch where the ball hit on the front wall. Put an "X" with tape on the wall when you've found your spot. It will help you visually to cement the serve in your mind.

Also, move around the service box and try different angles. The greater variety of serves you have, the more in control you are as a server.

The next serve is the Z-serve. The object of the hard Z-serve is to hit it hard enough so your opponent can't cut it off before it hits the third wall. The spin created from hitting three different walls causes the ball to travel parallel with the back wall and die.

It takes more strength and wrist snap to hit an accurate Z-serve off the same motion as a drive serve. But that's one of the differences between someone who's an advanced racquetball player and someone who is an intermediate.

You adjust your serve by using the corner as a gauge. The closer you hit the ball to the corner, the tighter the serve will be. When it hits the third wall, it should catch the wall hard and shoot out parallel to the back wall. The farther away from the corner you hit the wall, the less spin you get when the ball hits the third wall. Instead of coming out parallel, it will angle back toward the backwall.



A drive serve (left) is hit flat and bounces just over the short line on the way to the back corner. A lob is more of a push stroke. It should be hit high and die near the back wall.

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THE SCIENCE OF SERVING



This is an excellent starting group of serves. You now have 10 different serves from two basic serves. But let me stress this again. To gain optimum advantage and deception, all serves must be hit off the same service motion.

The last basic serve is the lob. It can be hit from anywhere on the court, thus creating different angles. The lob is more of a push stroke than a normal racquetball stroke. You don't snap your wrist and your arm motion is fairly straight. You want to feel as if you're cradling the ball on your strings for as long as possible. It's a very soft motion.

For a high lob serve, get the ball as high on the front wall as possible. The objective is to have it bounce inside the five-foot mark and then die in the back corner. These serves are effective because your opponent has to return a ball that is coming straight down. Also, if you get the serve into the back corner, the receiver is fighting the walls.

These serves are very effective against someone who has trouble returning balls, or against a player who wants to shoot everything. They either get frustrated because they have to play a ceiling game, or they try to shoot impossible shots.

The next lob is the high Z. It is like the hard Z except it's hit very high on the wall with the soft lob touch. Spin is still created by hitting

three different walls. In fact, after the ball hits the third wall, it drops very fast, thus making it difficult to dig out of the back corner area.

There are also the half lobs. Hit these serves a touch harder and lower on the wall so they will strike the receiver around his or her chest. But don't hit it so hard that it comes off the back wall. This relatively simple serve assures the server that the return shot will not be low and hard. It's extremely difficult to go anywhere except the ceiling off this serve.

You should work and concentrate just as much on lob and second serves as on any other serve. A properly executed lob serve will get you a weak return just as quickly as a drive will.

To maximize improvement on your serves, practice them as often as possible, every day if you can. If you don't have drill time, you can utilize your play time to work for you. For example, in one 21-point game, pick a spot, say the right wall area, and work only on drives, and Zs to the right. It doesn't matter if the receiver is getting to the serves easily. That will make you more aware of getting your service motion consistent.

Good serves will improve your game and make the points easier to accumulate. Concentration and practice are the keys which make the difference between being an adequate or excellent player.

ADVANCED STROKE PROBLEMS

By Shannon Wright
with Steve Keeley

Editor's note: In the April 1981 issue we printed an article titled "How To Cure Common Errors," which dealt with basic stroke problems. The following article will "cure" stroke problems for an advanced player. This is reprinted from The Women's Book of Racquetball by Shannon Wright with Steve Keeley, Contemporary Books, Inc., Chicago, Ill. Copyright 1980 by Service Press, Inc. and Wright Racquetball, Inc.

Ask yourself about each of the following common errors related to strokes. "Do I do this?" If the answer is yes, correct it. If you discover you are committing more than one of these errors, arrange a list to work on. Work first on the easiest error to correct, then move on until you've gone through your entire list.

Backpedaling

A common setup error among beginning players is backpedaling in pursuit of shots. The ball comes at them off the front wall and they back up or run in reverse.

Backpedaling causes numerous problems. It is a slow way to move, and you're liable to trip and end up with splinters in your rear cushion. If you don't trip, you are still off balance when you hit the ball—with most of your weight on the rear foot as you continue to backpedal through the swing. In addition, backpedaling contributes to other stroke errors, such as the step-less swing, the push stroke, and lack of body rotation.

The correction consists of turning and moving sideways as you pursue the ball into deep court. As the ball rebounds off the front wall, pull your racquet back into the backswing position and face the sidewall—the right sidewall if you're going to hit a forehand, the left sidewall for a backhand. Then chase the ball with a side stride, as when a basketball player moves laterally when covering an opponent who is dribbling the basketball.

Try the sideways retreat into back court without the ball at first. Start at the short line and pretend a ball has been lobbed over your head. Quickly turn to face the right sidewall, and side sideways toward the back wall. Repeat this until the movement becomes natural. Then try the sideways retreat from the

short line while facing the left sidewall—as though running down a shot to be hit with your backhand.

Open Stance

Many hardwood novices hit the ball while facing the front wall. They see the ball coming at them from the front court, and they either just stand there or they backpedal so that as the ball comes into their contact zone, their pelvis and shoulders are pointed at the front wall. This is called an open stance and it is disadvantageous. This incorrect stance limits your swing by not allowing the pelvis and hips to come into play (body rotation). All that swings is the arm, so the net result is a loss of stroke power. In addition, shots hit from an open stance tend to go into the middle of the court or crosscourt. This is a problem when you want to kill the ball since most kill shots should go up and down the line.

A problem closely related to hitting from an open stance is stepping into the ball with your rear foot. When you do this, you place your rear foot closer to the rear sidewall than your front foot. Hence, stepping into the ball with the rear foot is a form of setting up on a shot in an open stance. It is incorrect.

Correct the open stance or the rear foot lead by facing the right sidewall for forehands or the left sidewall for backhands. Then, in preparation for the swing, step toward the sidewall with your lead foot. This will cause your pelvis and shoulders to face the sidewall when you swing, which takes care of all the symptoms I mentioned earlier. Now your swing will be more natural and use less arm effort. Your body weight will automatically be behind the stroke, and you will tend to hit the ball straight down the line instead of down the middle or crosscourt.

The closed stance is such an important concept that I would like you to envision yourself on the court right now to go through a mental rehearsal of the correct technique. Okay, you see the ball coming to your forehand in right deep court. Your initial reaction is to start moving toward the spot at which the ball, after its floor bounce, will descend to knee height. You want to be set and stepping into the ball as it drops into your contact zone. As you move toward this area, you draw your racquet into the backswing position with the wrist cocked. Now you begin to visualize



The worst form from an open stance is when a player totally faces the front wall when hitting the ball. There is relatively no power on the shot.

where the ball will be. You turn your body to face the right sidewall. Both feet are approximately parallel to each other and about equidistant from that sidewall. Now the ball is descending into your hitting area. You get into the closed stance by moving your lead foot about two feet closer to the right sidewall. Then you swing.

Twirly-Twirly

You have probably observed or even performed the twirly-twirly follow-through. This happens when the player sets up for a shot and swings, with her body following her racquet around—and perhaps around again. Typically, however, the twirly-twirly follow-through is a 270- to 360-degree turn. The player ends up facing the left sidewall on forehands, the right sidewall on backhands.

This error is most common among ladies who use what my fellow pro, Jean Sauser, calls a helicopter swing. The helicopter swing involves sticking your arm straight out from your body with a stiff or locked wrist. The ensuing swing is like the rotation of a helicopter blade. This is what happens: The lack of wrist cock causes no wrist break. This decreases power, so the player must produce stroke power entirely with her upper arm and body, and the helicopter-blade swinging arm pulls the entire body around. The rear leg usually lifts in the air and the ball of the lead foot serves as a pivot. Then, around and around she goes, like a racquet-wielding top.

ADVANCED STROKE PROBLEMS



The twirly-twirly shot is when the player swings with a roundhouse stroke and the entire body follows the racquet around.

The cure for the twirly-twirly is: Cock your wrist so that you can snap the racquet when you hit the ball. Crook your elbow at 90 degrees on the backswing. Finally, step into a closed stance with your lead foot and don't allow your shoulders to open up so much (face the front wall) on the follow-through.

Helicopter Swing

I use Jean Sauter's metaphor for this common error because it is so descriptive. The helicopter begins with a flat, waist-high backswing in which the arm draws back level with the floor and with no wrist cock. The ensuing



There is absolutely no wrist cock with this forehand helicopter swing. This flat, waist-high backswing reduces power.

swing is flat, waist-high, with the arm straight out and with no wrist snap. The follow-through is flat, waist-high, with the arm straight back and with no wrist flex. (The follow-through may or may not continue around for a twirly-twirly.)

The helicopter, like the twirly-twirly, reduces power and puts you off balance on the follow-through. Worse, this stiff-arm swing may put a strain on your elbow. Any joint is more susceptible to strain or other injury when it is locked, as is the elbow joint during the helicopter swing.

Review the correction for the twirly-twirly to remedy the helicopter. It is especially important to crook your elbow at 90 degrees during the backswing. Conjure up the image of a baseball pitcher throwing a sidearm. Got it? Now imitate that image with your racquet as you swing at air. Your bent elbow should lead the swing to the potential point of contact, at which time the wrist releases or snaps forward to lead the swing during your follow-through. Listen for the brisk swishing sound of the strings accelerating through the air during the wrist snap. (This auditory clue to faster head speed definitely isn't present during the helicopter swing.)

Strokus Interruptus

Perhaps just as common as the twirly-twirly follow-through is the opposite syndrome—the follow-through that is brought to an abrupt stop shortly after the ball contact. The stroke just stops as though it runs into a brick wall.

The problem with this strokus interruptus is that you put a heavy strain on your elbow when you bring your swing to a jarring halt. I cringe every time I see this common error committed because I know that the player probably is or will be playing with a sore elbow. It really is like hitting a brick wall in midswing, with the same painful consequences.

The solution is not difficult once you acknowledge that the problem exists. I have found that players who have a stop-short follow-through generally also have a start-short backswing. One seems to beget the other, causing the player to poke at or punch, rather than properly stroke, the ball. The racquetball stroke is not a poke, punch, push, or tap. Do not hit the ball as though putting a shot. Instead, use a longer, more sweeping motion that is interrupted only by the wrist snap at midswing.

Are you still having problems with strokus interruptus on your follow-through? Then try this gimmick: Imagine a string is tied to the end of your racquet. You swing at the ball and just after you contact it an imaginary puppeteer steadily tugs on the string to pull the racquet for a complete follow-through.

Little has been said about the follow-

through, since little thought need usually attend it. That is because a proper follow-through is the consequence of a proper swing—not vice versa. This common error—strokus interruptus—illustrates this point particularly well.



One common error leading to strokus interruptus is the shortened backswing. Here, Wright demonstrates the proper form for the beginning of a forehand stroke.

Short Backswing

The obvious common error related to strokus interruptus is the shortened backswing. This mistake is caused either by simply not being in the habit of drawing the racquet back far enough on the backswing, or by not setting up quickly enough on the ball.

Correct the first case of bad habit by giving yourself the mental command before each backswing to pull the racquet back farther and/or higher. After a couple of days, these mental cues will no longer be necessary since the proper backswing will be established firmly in your subconscious. There is an alternate solution that might have already occurred to you. Entice the imaginary puppeteer to pull your backswing back a little farther. Try 10 percent farther back for a few strokes, then 10 percent more, and so on, until your backswing is deep and high enough.

Correct the second case—setting up too slowly—by, of course, setting up on the shot more quickly. As soon as you see the ball coming at, say, your forehand, get your feet moving so that you arrive at the hitting area before the ball does. Then you'll have time to draw your racquet back into a proper backswing.

The term "too short a backswing" is somewhat inappropriate since it implies only one dimension—back—with the backswing. Actually, the racquetball backswing involves two directions—height and depth. Height refers to how far above your head the racquet

goes. Depth means how far toward the back wall the racquet is drawn. In general, the higher and deeper the backswing, the greater the subsequent stroke power.

You can prove this to yourself. First, test *depth*. You are going to hit shots with a constant height but with a varying depth of backswing. Go through each of the following steps by starting the stroke with a backswing drawn up so that the butt of the handle is ear-high. This is the constant height. Ready? Start with a one-foot-deep backswing and hit four or five shots straight into the front wall. In other words, your backswing starts only one foot behind your point of contact. (Use a normal follow-through.) Note the power of your stroke in terms of velocity. Next, start with a two-foot-deep backswing. Hit four or five shots and make a mental note of the power relative to the one-foot backswing in the prior step. Then do the same thing, only with a three-foot backswing. Finally, use a very deep backswing.

Now let's test the effect on power of varying *height* of backswing. You are going to hit four or five shots with the depth of your backswing remaining constant but the height varying. Start each of the swings with your normal depth of backswing—the maximally comfortable depth. Then hit the first series of four or five shots with no height at all on the backswing. That is, your arm starts back with an absolutely level backswing—about knee high. Note your stroke power. Hit the next four or five shots with a slightly elevated backswing. That is, start the racquet about six inches higher than in the previous step—about six inches above knee height. Again, note your relative stroke power. Then take the racquet up six inches higher, or starting about a foot above knee height. Now hit shots with a very high backswing. What effect did gradually increasing the height of backswing in these steps have on power? On accuracy?

Perhaps you found that increasing the height of backswing had more effect on power than did increasing the depth. Perhaps you experienced just the opposite. Perhaps you lost control with a higher or a deeper backswing. I personally find that taking my racquet farther back increases my power without sacrificing control, whereas taking my racquet farther up on the backswing increases power but decreases accuracy somewhat. I'm not saying that these effects will hold for you. Just how far back or high the backswing can go before you start to lose stroke control is an individual factor that you will discover only through an analytical approach similar to the one outlined above.

The cause and effect of the racquetball backswing are similar to those of hammering a nail or splitting wood with an ax. What happens to power and accuracy when you take different lengths of backswings with these hitting implements?

Underhanded Swing

This error is much more common with the forehand than with the backhand. Whichever stroke you use, swinging underhanded means that you allow the racquet head to tilt down, or fall below the level of your wrist during the downswing. Take a mental snapshot that freezes your forehand stroke right at ball contact. Does the racquet handle angle toward the floor rather than being parallel to it? If so, you are swinging underhanded.

Underhanded strokes bring about undesirable shots. The balls skip into the floor if you happen to make contact too deep—behind the normal contact zone. Or, the balls fly too high into the front wall if you make contact too far forward—in front of your proper contact zone. Thus, underhanded swings lead to a loss of horizontal accuracy. This is bad, be-



The underhand swing frequently begins with a very high backswing. Chances are your shot will go too high.



Although neither of these two backhand backswings are incorrect, the one at the top is preferred because it will give the person more coil, and, hence, more power.

cause the primary target area in racquetball is a horizontal strip of the front wall that stretches 20 feet from sidewall to sidewall and only a foot up from the floor. This strip is the kill shot target area, but you'll miss it if you swing underhanded.

Self-diagnosis of the underhanded swing is sometimes difficult because players often feel they are swinging sidearm when, in fact, they are scooping the ball with a softball pitcher's underhanded throwing motion. I recommend that you have a friend take a look at your forehand. If she says you swing like a sidearm baseball pitcher, then you're okay. But if she says you swing like an underhanded softball pitcher, then it's time for a change.

The change to the more level stroke isn't difficult if you follow this two-step process: 1) Put your racquet aside and take the racquetball into your gun hand. Now, pretend you are a sidearm baseball pitcher blazing a fastball at the front wall. Go ahead and throw, remembering that these are fastballs, not change-ups. Repeat until the motion feels comfortable and you get a sense of horizontal or side-to-side accuracy on your throws; 2) Now repeat the same throwing motion, only use your racquet to hit the ball. The throwing and hitting have similar backswings, wrist cocks, downswings, wrist breaks, and follow-throughs—if you are throwing and hitting sidearm. Again, after a few hits you should feel an increase in side-to-side bottom-board control.

You don't like this analogy? Then try imitating a rock skipper. The kinetics of the racquetball forehand are remarkably similar to that sidearm throwing motion used to skip a

ADVANCED STROKE PROBLEMS

flat rock across a pond. Picture it, then imitate.

I have not really addressed this common error for the backhand because, as I mentioned, it is much more prevalent on forehands. In addition, the backhand stroke is not quite as much a sidearm stroke as is the forehand. Ideally, it is a combination of the baseball pitcher's sidearm throw and the golfer's underhanded swing. Therefore, your racquet handle may angle a bit more toward the floor than with the forehand, though it should not point directly at the floor, because the backhand swing is not entirely underhanded.

Too-High Contact

This common error is almost universal among beginning players. The error appears in two forms: 1) Some players realize they contact the ball above their knees and continue to do so because they think that this is the correct height of contact. This is a height contact error due to ignorance; 2) Other players think they hit it around the waist. Recall the anecdote about my student who kept hitting waist-high shots while insisting she was hitting knee-high shots. I finally told her to hit the ball ankle-high and she started making contact at the knees—which is the height at which I wanted her to hit the ball in the first place.

Many players unwittingly reinforce the error of too-high contact by *bouncing* the ball too high during the drop-and-hit exercises used throughout this book. I emphasize that you must bounce the ball during these drills so that it peaks at about your knees. Then make contact just after the ball peaks—at the knees or lower.

Contacting the ball too high is sometimes due merely to a miscalculation in setting up. For example, rushing forward after the ball or otherwise setting up too close to it may force you to make contact at the waist or above.

Overhead Syndrome

This common error comes about when a player rushes forward on a ball to her forehand that would normally be a setup at her knees—if only she gave the ball a chance to fall to knee height. Not only does she contact the ball above her knees, she also hits it with an overhead motion similar to hitting a tennis serve or throwing a baseball overhead. There may be a rudiment of reason behind this overhead tendency among novices. The overhead swing seems natural and powerful to anyone who has tossed a ball in prior sports encounters. Indeed, this stroke is natural and powerful, but in racquetball it is suicidal.

Why suicidal? Two reasons: First, because of the angle of the shot. The flight path of the ball originates at head height or above and



The overhead syndrome is a carryover from tennis in which the shot is similar to a tennis serve. Remember there is no net in racquetball, therefore this is not necessary.

aims down at a target area on the front wall near the floor. Geometry, common sense, and experience should tell you that even if you hit the front wall within an inch of the floor, such a shot will rebound off the front wall into the floor and pop high into the air. The result is a setup for the receiver. Second, as you recall from our rock-skipping analogy for the underhanded swing, you lose horizontal accuracy when you swing with anything less than a sidearm stroke. The overhead swing is just an underhanded swing turned upside down. The result is the same in either case—your shots skip into the floor or hit too high on the front wall.

Returning underneath the ball rather than backing up on it and swinging level at knee height has two other detrimental consequences. First, you tend to hit shots high on the front wall or into the ceiling. Second, you often find yourself off balance and falling backwards (no step into the ball or body rotation) if you run too far underneath the shot.

Correct the overhead syndrome by having patience when setting up on shots. In some cases, it is better to let the ball come to you rather than to attack it with an overzealous charge. Think of yourself as a baseball batter who waits for the ball to come into the strike zone before swinging. If you have trouble lowering your height of contact at first, try doing it gradually. Start with an overhead height of contact and proceed to a chest-high contact, then to a waist-high contact, to a knee-high contact. As you gradually lower your point of contact, you will probably lower the front wall point of contact for your shots. In addition, the lower you contact the ball, the more level the ball's flight to the front wall, which means flatter rollouts.

Too-Low Contact

A much less common error, but one worth mentioning, is contacting the ball too low. My preceding explanation might mislead you into believing that if you could contact the ball just a wrist thong's diameter up from the floor, you would get absolutely flat rollouts every time. The defect here is in the stroke, not in the theory. Most players find it difficult to contact the ball that close to the floor without throwing off their strokes. Shoestring-high hitting usually necessitates swinging underhanded, which I have already refuted.

Do your shots consistently skip or go too high into the front wall? Do you find yourself bending uncomfortably at the knees and waist to get way down on the ball? That's too much bend. Straighten up your act and go for knee-high contact.



If you contact the ball too low, chances are you will skip in a lot of shots. Bring it up a little to your knees.

Getting Down

That leads us to getting down on the ball. The common error here lies in setting up on a shot as though rigor mortis had set in yesterday. There is no flex at the knees, as though you were in double leg casts, and there is no bend at the waist, as if you were wearing a cement corset. How do you expect to get down low enough to hit the ball at knee height if you bend like this?

For many players, a more practical point is *how much* you should bend in getting down on the ball. Well, I've already hinted at the answer to this when I mentioned your physiology on numerous occasions. Different body builds demand different degrees and points of bending.

There are basically two ways to get down on the ball: bending at your waist, and/or bending at your knees. Lanky women will have to bend more at both places to attain a

reasonable knee-high stroke. Shorter players are already down there near the floor and don't have to flex so much at the knees and waist. You see, getting down on the ball is very much an individual thing. No two women on the pro tour get down in exactly the same manner, so I can't give you an exact model to imitate.

My final advice is to be comfortable and natural, and to experiment. Drop and hit some shots while bending a lot. Then drop and hit some more shots from a more upright stance. Which feels more comfortable and natural? Try some shots with a stance in between these two extremes. What about more knee bend, or less? What about more waist bend, or less? The permutations are finite, and there is one correct stance for you. You'll find it if you look hard enough.

Too-Close Contact

This common error plagues a majority of beginning players. Do you crowd yourself on your swings? Admit guilt if you continually elbow yourself on your downswings. Contacting the ball too close to your body jams your stroke, which jacks up swing smoothness. The result is greatly decreased power, not to mention sore ribs.



Top: The player has let the ball come in too close to her body. **Bottom:** The proper distance to set up for a shot.

This problem comes about not because the ball crowds your body, but because *you* crowd the ball while setting up on the shot. Hence, the solution is to set up farther from the ball. Remember that your extended arm and racquet give you at least three feet of reach. Plus, when you step into the closed stance, it puts you at least two more feet close to the ball. That gives you a total of five feet of extension. Use that extension and do not overrun your contact zone when you set up. Make ball contact comfortably away from your body.

Too-Far Contact

A much less common error is contacting the ball too far from the body. I come across only about one such reacher for every five jammers in my clinics.



But don't let the ball get too far away from your body. This indicates a problem in setting up.

As in the preceding error, contacting the ball too far from the body usually indicates a problem in setting up. Practice moving closer to the ball before you take your final step into the shot. Be sure that your final step takes you into the closed stance, and then use a proper stroke rather than the stiff-armed helicopter.

Too-Deep Contact

Beginning players invariably contact the ball too high and too deep in the stroke. Now let's consider contacting the ball too deep in the swing.

This is another ignorance/illusion error, and it is cured with a good dose of awareness. First, let's attack ignorance: Do you know that you should contact the ball no more than a foot behind your lead foot (after you step into the ball). Now you do. Next, illusion. Now that you realize that you should contact the ball just after it passes your lead foot, do you still



Hitting the ball too deep will cause obvious problems. Your ceiling shots (top) may not reach the front wall and your forehand shots off the back wall may result in a weak return.

insist that you aren't hitting too deep in your stroke? If so, don't take my word that you may be hitting too deep. Have a friend watch you hit, and have her look for the too-deep symptoms I'm about to describe. Take her into the court with you and drop-and-hit a few shots while she scrutinizes your stroke from the side, not from in front or back of you. You say that she agrees with me, that you're hitting too deep? Fine, now you're aware.

If you don't have a friend to diagnose this common error for you, look for these symptoms of the too-deep syndrome.

This error occurs more when a very lively ball is used. In fact, sometimes the lively ball whizzes at you so fast that you're content just to get a racquet on it, even if you must make contact very deep while falling backward. This error, then, may be unavoidable if you play with a superball. But don't go hang yourself by your sports bra yet. Court exposure seems to provide an immunity to this beginner's scourge, because few intermediates

ADVANCED STROKE PROBLEMS

are plagued by the too-deep syndrome and it is extremely rare among the advanced ranks. I'm not suggesting that you must wait for years of experience to layer on your ball-pocked body before you can cure this malady. You can either practice for hours a day or use a slower ball that allows for more reaction time on every shot.

Contacting the ball too deep in the stroke is magnified when the ball comes off the back wall. The beginner typically sets up too far from the back wall so that when the ball descends to knee height, her body is incorrectly positioned in front of, instead of behind, the sphere. She then has to lean back and reach back with the racquet to scoop the ball in the proper contact area. The shot angles languidly into the sidewall.

The too-deep contact on back wall shots is similarly cured through experience. You'll find, as I alluded to earlier, that the more you play, the more time expands. This is an Einsteinian way of saying that today the ball may come at you and rebound off the back

wall at a certain speed that allows too little time to set up properly on the shot. But a year from now, if a ball comes at you at the same speed, you'll have enough time to wipe your brow on your mintowel and swing.

I don't expect you to surrender to this common error and to wait for experience to cure you with its wonderful expansion of time. That's too long to wait. Besides using a slower ball, you can learn to set up more quickly on shots. Position yourself deeper in the court while waiting for the ball to fall to knee level. Then station yourself behind the ball when you hit it. On back wall shots, move quickly and closer to the back wall. Plant your foot and move forward with the ball, but not in front of it. Then bash the ball when it dares enter your contact zone.

Too-Far-Forward Contact

This common error is usually the companion of another mistake already covered—contacting the ball too far from the body. And, like reaching for the ball, contacting too far

forward is relatively rare even among inexperienced players. I estimate that among beginners, 10 times as many contact the ball too deep as those who hit too far forward.

Set up closer to the front wall if this common error is yours. The proper point of contact for forehands is a foot behind your lead foot after you have stepped into a closed stance.



If you hit the ball too far forward, you lose power and you are off-balance on the follow-through.

It is the same for the backhand: hit the ball behind the lead foot. With neither stroke should you make contact in front of the lead foot, or else you'll suffer the consequences I described.

Not Watching the Ball

Perhaps the oldest of sports adages is to "keep your eye on the ball." It doesn't matter what the sport or the type of ball; the secret seems to be to glue your eyes to the orb in flight. This holds true in racquetball. Take a look at almost any photo of a pro just as she swings. Her eyes are riveted to the ball with the intensity of a bird eyeballing a fat worm. Handball great Paul Haber once responded to a query on the importance of watching the ball, "I watch the ball all the time—even during timeouts."

Many players catch a glimpse of the ball coming off the front wall, tell themselves they are watching the ball, and later wonder why they get a mis-hit. In my book, watching the ball means picking its flight up as soon as possible after your opponent's shot, and then looking at the sphere right up to the moment it contacts your racquet strings. You may even want to look for the ghost of the ball. This is the place that it dematerialized the instant your racquet hit it. If you can see the ghost then you are surely watching the ball all the way into the racquet strings.

Finally, it helps many players to watch more than just the ball as it courses off the front wall. Look for the ball's seam or its perky little navel. Again, if you can distinguish these anatomical parts (or even if you are just looking for them), you are surely watching the ball. **R**

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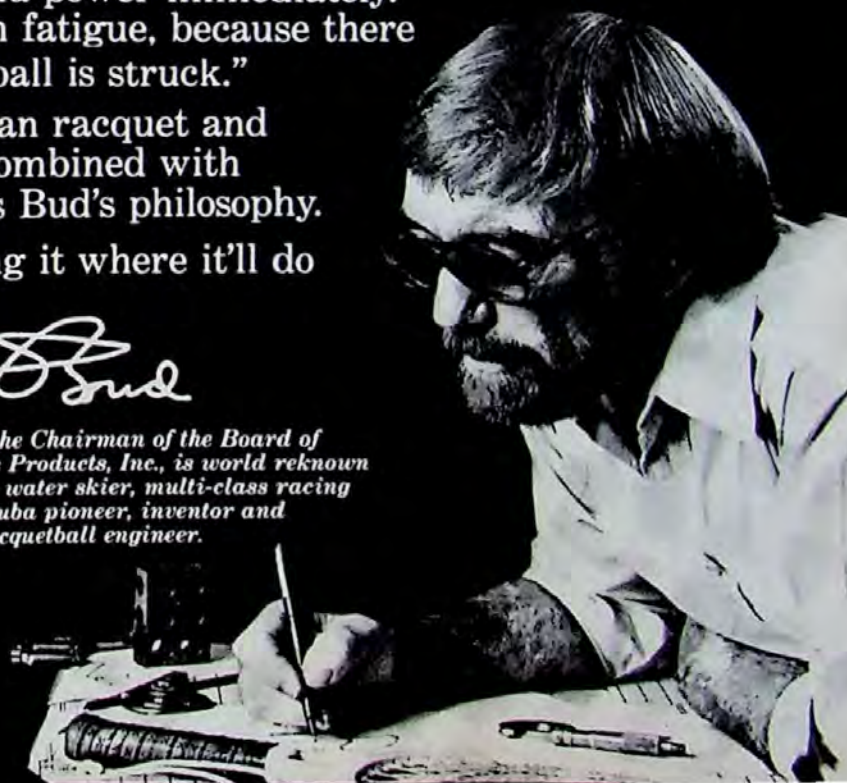
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ROUNDING OUT AN ADVANCED GAME

By Charles Garfinkel

Advanced players have many outstanding attributes. They can serve accurately, powerfully, and consistently. They can execute most shots with a high degree of proficiency. And they are usually in excellent physical shape.

When watching players at an advanced level, a novice or intermediate player sometimes thinks that there is no way the advanced player can become even better. Wrong. There are some definite ways in which the advanced player can improve his game. That's what we will discuss here.

First, an advanced player can put pressure on his opponent by serving both serves hard. Don't worry about the possible double fault. By practicing your drive serves on first and second serves, you'll be amazed at the accuracy you are able to develop. Of course, you may double fault occasionally, but the aces and weak service returns that you get will more than make up for it.

Naturally, you must have the confidence to attempt this type of serving strategy. To be able to serve both serves in this manner, you must practice diligently.

Stand in the middle of the service box, and serve to the side that feels most comfortable to you. Usually, it is the left side for a right-handed player. When serving to the left side you should aim to the front wall about a foot left of center and three feet up from the floor. You should serve to that spot over and over. If you find that your serves are falling short, serve slightly higher on the front wall.

By doing this continually, you will develop a definite "feel" for the area in which you want your serve to hit. Once you feel comfortable serving to the left side, then practice serving to the right side in the same manner.

When you think you're getting your drive serves in consistently, you should then practice with a partner, with you serving an entire game to 21. All serves must be drives.

You should win the game easily since you have the advantage of serving. But if you served more than two double faults, you need more practice.

If serving two drive serves seems too risky, you can try some hard Z-serves on your second serves. This serve should eliminate double faults.

To hit the hard Z-serve to the left side, stand slightly to the left of center. You should be aiming for a spot about three feet high and about two feet to the left of the right sidewall.

On the hard Z to the right side, stand slightly to the right of center. You should be aiming for a spot about three feet high and about two feet to the right of the left sidewall.

Although this is a "safer" serve, your chances of scoring outright aces or eliciting a weak return, will be greatly decreased.

A serve that is rarely used is the backhand drive serve. Even players who have devastating backhands, surprisingly, never use this serve. But if hit correctly, the serve will score many points outright, as it will catch your opponent off guard.

This serve is coming at your opponent at a different angle than most players are used to.

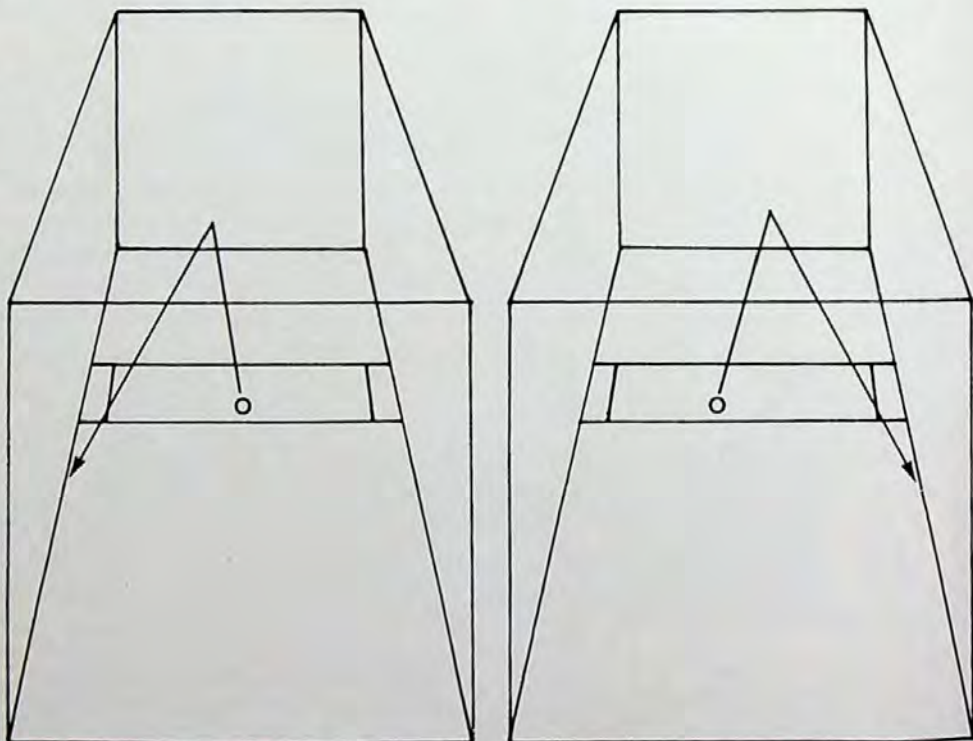
When practicing the backhand drive serve, stand in center court. This will enable you to serve down the line or crosscourt.

However, don't serve the backhand drive from the right side of the court. The angle that the serve presents will make it difficult for you to generate much power. In addition, you will find yourself out of position.

Another advanced strategy is the volley (hitting the ball without it bouncing). This takes split second timing and excellent hand-eye coordination. It is vital to keep your eyes on the ball at all times. You should actually see the ball hit the strings.

To practice your volleying, hit easy floaters to the front wall. Before they bounce, you should attempt to hit the ball as low and as hard as you can.

You must be sure to hit this shot with great

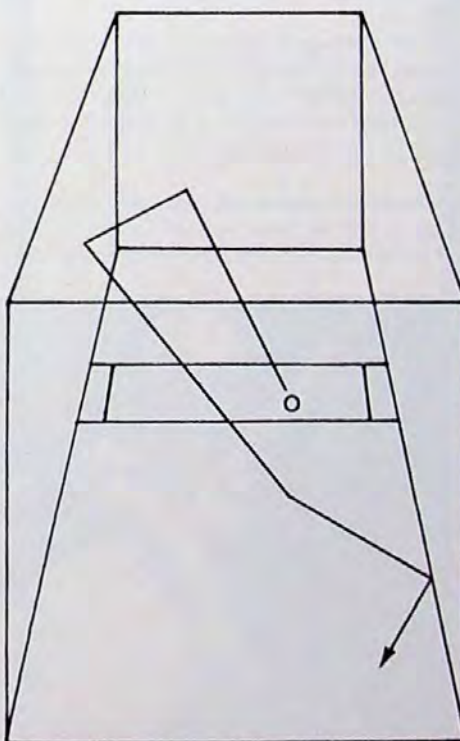
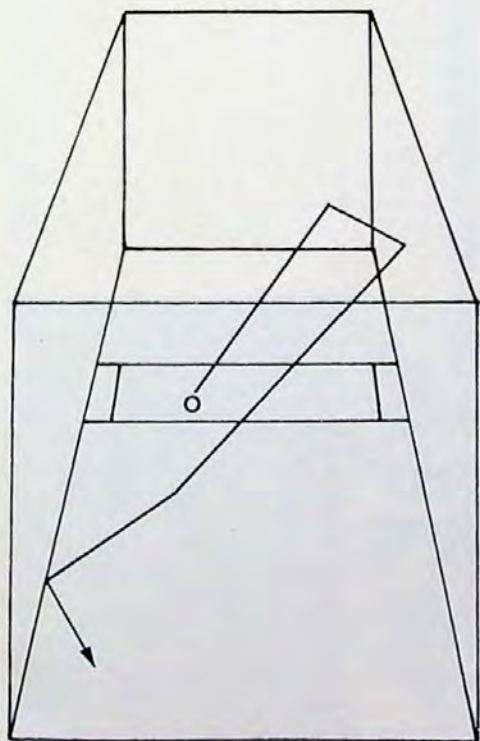


The author suggests that an advanced player is confident of hitting hard drive serves on his second serve. He also has a better accuracy rate of making them crack out behind the short line.



Photos by Andre Gorzynski

Charles Garfinkel says that a good advanced player may try a strong backhand drive serve (left) and also needs to master volleying the ball (right) out of the air to catch the opponent off-guard.



Another tough second serve the advanced player uses is the sharp Z in which the opponent is handcuffed in backcourt.

power, using a shortened swing. You should also take the ball as far in front of you as is comfortably possible. This will enable you to contact the ball sooner, which will give your opponent less time to adjust to the shot.

After practicing by yourself, again practice with a partner. You should attempt to volley as many of his service returns as possible.

Once you feel confident in your volleying, you should move on to half volleying. A half volley is when you hit the ball immediately after it hits the floor. Another shot to practice is the "shorthop." When a shot is coming off a ceiling ball, you have to have perfect timing to catch it after it bounces. This shot is referred to as "shorthopping the ball."

Because this shot is so difficult to hit, you should practice with racquetballs that are old and very dead. In this way, you will be able to become acclimated to the bounce as it ricochets off the ceiling. As your timing improves and you start hitting the shot with more accuracy, switch to a ball that is livelier.

By now, you can see that a pattern is being firmly established. That is, you're trying to keep constant pressure on your opponent by not giving him or her a defensive shot. This will keep him or her off balance constantly.

As for return of serve, you should strive to hit only the following shots:

1. Passing shots down the line and cross-court.
2. Kill shots from the forehand and backhand side.
3. Pinch shots from the forehand and backhand side.
4. Overhead kills and overhead passing shots.

5. Volleys in the air. However, be careful not to cross the five-foot line too early.

You will have to move quickly to hit these shots. However, you can quickly frustrate a server who is serving mostly lob serves by either passing him with a volley cross-court, or hitting straight down the line.

As for general play, use the same variety of shots mentioned for return of serves. However, be ready to half volley shots, and to "shorthop" ceiling balls. These will surprise your opponent.

Many advanced players stick strictly to kill shots. But there are other shots an advanced player uses.

By continually hitting hard passes that have your opponent on the run, sooner or later you will get an easy shot to put away.

You may not want to attempt to "short hop" every ceiling ball, so change to hard overheads. If your opponent is out of position, you could try an overhead kill or pass shot.

When hitting overhead kill shots, it is best to pinch the ball. The shot will usually ricochet away from your surprised opponent.

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Advanced Instruction Guide

HOW A LEFTY CAN BEAT A RIGHTY

By Craig McCoy

If you're in that minority of people who are lefthanded, you can take heart while playing racquetball. You are at a distinct advantage when playing a righthander because you're used to everything a righty does. Everything you do is backwards to him so it is the right-handed player who has to change game plans.

I know what I'm talking about because I'm one of the few active lefthanded pro players on the tour. It is usually my opponents who have to adjust to my game, not me to theirs. Of course, the lefthander most certainly has to adjust his or her game to another lefthander, but in tournament competition, chances of two lefthanders meeting one another are slim.

The strategies used by the lefthanded player and those by a righthander are essentially the same. Although the player who is a southpaw may think he is at a disadvantage, believe me, the reverse is the case.

The main reason the lefty has the advantage is that he does most things backwards or in reverse from the righthander's perspec-

tive. The lefthander is a mirror image of the righthander.

Players from the novice category on up through the pro level tend to form a certain pattern of how they hit the ball and how they play. Since there are many more righthanded players than there are lefthanders, righthanders tend to adjust their game style to playing righthanders.

For the lefthander, who plays the righty, the pass and the ceiling ball are two key shots.

The ceiling ball is a good example of how to take advantage of the righthanded player. If you're righthanded, pay particular attention because I'm discussing just how the lefthander can beat you.

The lefty is used to hitting a ceiling ball to the left side of the court with the backhand, feeding the righthanded opponent's backhand, whereas the righthander is used to hitting a ceiling ball up and down the line with other righthanders. The righthanded player wouldn't want to return the ball to the left side of the court against a lefty because then he is feeding his forehand strength. But, because the average righthander is not used to returning a ceiling ball cross-court with his backhand, giving a lefty a forehand shot happens more times than not on ceiling balls.



When setting up for your backhand ceiling ball, the correct stance is with your feet and body facing the sidewall. After you are in this position, the next step is to twist the upper portion of your body (from the waist) toward the back wall so that your chest is facing the back right-hand corner. This enables you to uncoil the upper portion of your body on your swing and on the follow-through. By doing this, your hips and the chest-shoulder area of your body get in on the action so that you are not just swinging with your arm.

Traditionally, when you hit a ceiling ball, you look for a shot to hit starting at about waist-high on up. But, in today's style of game with the fast ball, the waist-high shot is one you'll probably try to kill. Nowadays, the ceiling ball is usually hit from the chest area and higher. From this chest starting point, your swing is already coming under the ball. This should give you the proper angle on your racquet to hit the ball to the ceiling. Therefore, the only part to really worry about now is how hard and where to hit the ball on the ceiling.

There is a theory behind this, one which pro Charlie Brumfield calls the Hypotenuse Theory. The further away a ball has to travel the less velocity it will have. This is very important when playing with a fast ball. During a practice session try this: Hit two ceiling balls at about the same velocity. One should hit the ceiling about two to three feet from the front wall, and the other one should hit the ceiling about eight to 10 feet from the front wall. One should come back further than the other. The ball hitting closer to the front wall will carry back farther due to its angle of rebound off the ceiling. A good rule of thumb to follow is that the closer to the front wall you hit your ceiling ball, the less velocity you need to put behind it. Likewise, the further away from the front wall your ball hits the ceiling wall the more velocity you need to put behind it to make it rebound the same distance.

Always remember that when hitting any shot, especially the ceiling shot, the angle at which you hit the ball will make it come off at an opposite and equal angle, unless there is an extraordinary amount of spin. Therefore,

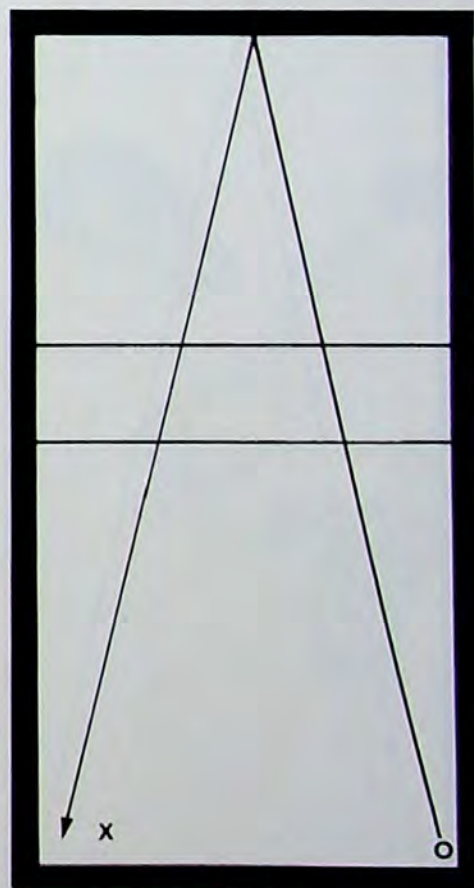
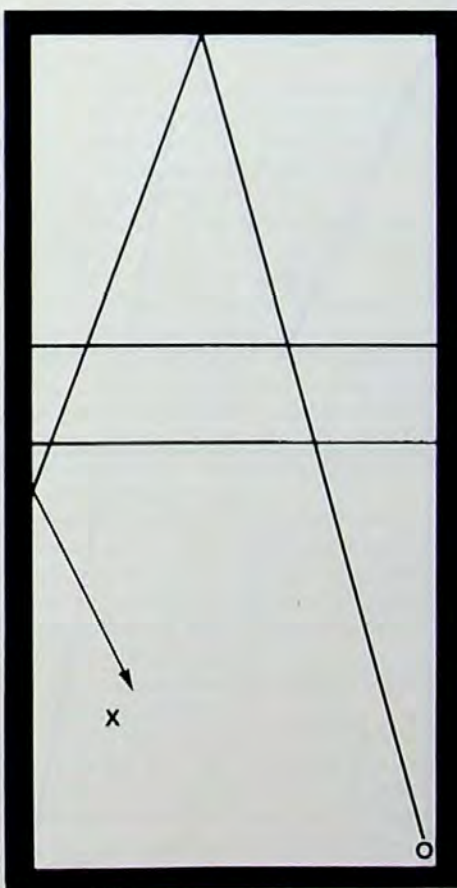
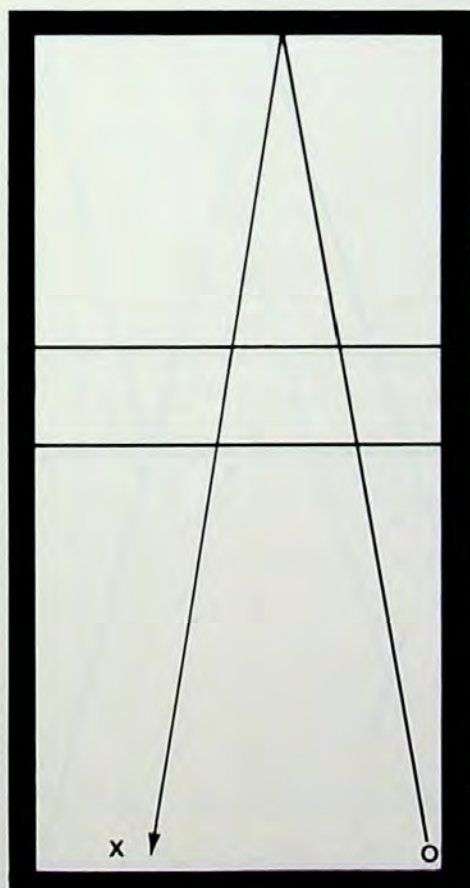
when hitting a ceiling ball cross-court, starting from the right-hand corner with your backhand, you should not hit the ball any further over than the center of the court. If you hit the ball too far to the right of center, your opponent will be able to step around it and return the ball with his forehand. If you hit the ball too far off of center to the left, the ball will almost always carry into the sidewall off the bounce, and usually give your opponent a plum with his backhand.

Passing Shots

The pass shot is basically the same as the ceiling ball. A lefty's strength on a passing shot is with his backhand from the right side of the court, hitting it cross-court to his right-handed opponent's backhand.

If the righthanded player is smart, he or she will try to return it cross-court to the left-hander's backhand, even though it might not be the best shot.

The stance and angle for the ceiling ball also holds true for the cross-court passing



The southpaw's ceiling ball shots often times hit the ceiling too far right of center which could put it into a plum position for the righty (far left), or often times it hits too far left of center and rebounds off the side wall, again giving the righty a good shot (center). The best bet (right) is to take it from your backhand corner to your opponent's backhand corner.

HOW A LEFTY CAN BEAT A RIGHTY

shot. The only thing different on the angle is where it comes back to your opponent. Since the cross-court pass is lower and has more velocity behind it, there are different shots and angles you can choose to hit. The lefty can hit a backhand cross-court pass from the back right-hand corner area and aim for the back left-hand corner area. You should strive to hit the ball in the center of the front wall. If you are off on this shot to the right, the ball will come back near your opponent, and he will only have to take a small step over to cut it off and pinch a winner in the left-hand front corner.

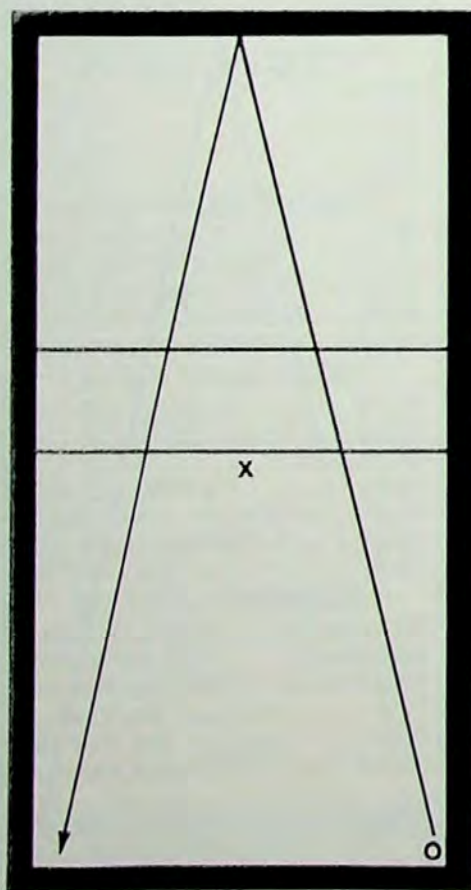
When you hit the ball from your angle of trajectory on the right, you will get the same angle of return to the left coming off of the front wall. When this passing shot is hit correctly, it should send your opponent scurrying to the back left-hand corner to dig the ball out. The ball should not reach the backwall, but if it does, it should only come off less than a foot high. This is referred to as the V pass. It entails the three basic ingredients: proper angle, proper speed, and proper height. As

far as height is concerned, the ball should strike the front wall at about two and one-half to three and one-half feet high. If your passes continually come off of the backwall, you're probably hitting them a little too high on the front wall. This is the most basic error. If you are hitting the ball that hard, you may have to lower your sights a little to the two- to three-foot range on the front wall.

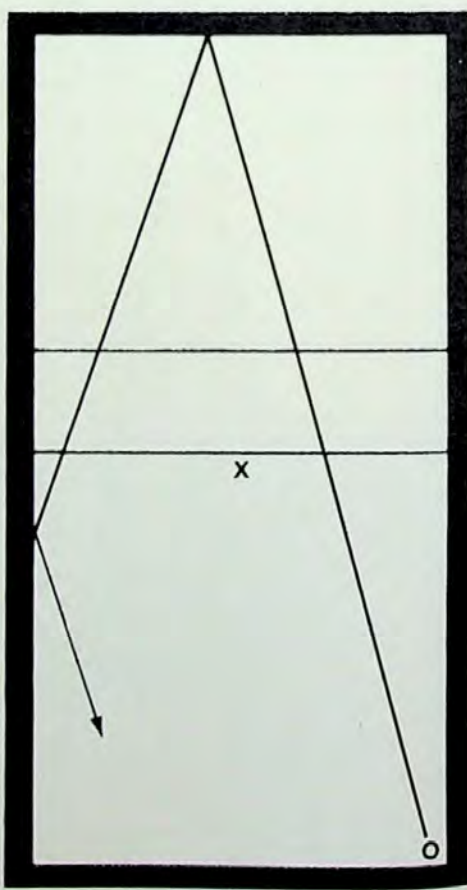
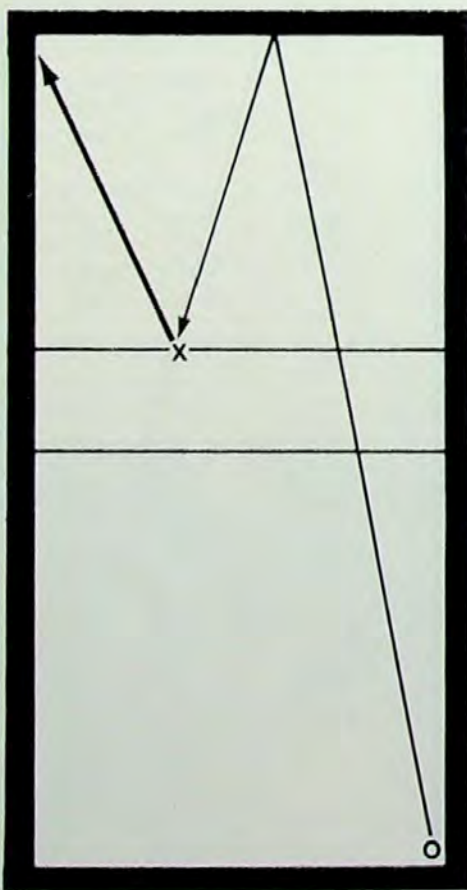
This leads us to the wide angle pass. This pass is exactly what the name implies. You hit it at a wider angle than the other passes. If you start out from the back right-hand corner you should strike the front wall anywhere from two to four feet left of center on the front wall. The ball should be hit two and one-half to three and one-half feet high on the front wall. The angle that you are putting on the ball causes it to come off at an angle towards the left side wall still on the fly. The objective of this shot is to make it hit the left sidewall on the fly four to six feet behind the short line. Because the ball is losing speed, and is most likely on a downward flight after it comes off the front wall, this will cause the ball to rebound off the left

wall and bounce on the floor before your opponent has an opportunity to hit it. Your opponent should be moving back to cover this passing shot by now. But the way that it comes off of the left wall should jam him up. Your opponent will be trying to return this shot on the run, but the ball (after it bounces) will be at his knee level, in close and still moving towards him, so that he probably will not be able to take a full swing. The only drawback to this pass is that if you hit the front wall too far to the left, the ball will come off and hit the sidewall too shallow. Your opponent, then, will probably not even have to move to return your pass as the ball will be coming right back at him.

The other passing shot could be called a kill shot pass, a favorite among the pros. It should be tried more with the V pass since there will be less chance of error on the V than on the wide angle pass. This shot is a cross between the kill and the pass. You're not going for the pass totally, but not going for the kill either. This shot is aimed between the two on the front wall, leaning more towards a



Correct V-pass will hit the front wall in the center and pass opponent on way to backcourt. The incorrect pass (right) hits to right of center and allows opponent to cut it off with an easy pinch.



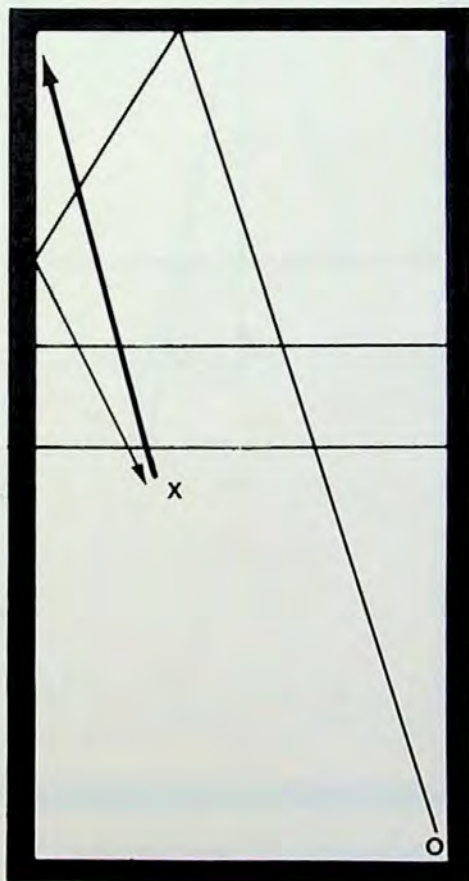
A correct wide-angle pass will hit front wall at such an angle as to make ball hit side wall and rebound off away from opponent. The

Advanced Instruction Guide

medium high kill shot, so that if you miss it, it usually turns into a good kill shot or a decent pass. The same angles apply.

So far in this article we have discussed the left's backhand ceiling ball and cross-court passing shots, hitting the ball from the back right-hand corner cross-court, or more understandably, across your body. But what about these same shots from the rest of the court? Here is a good rule to follow and it applies to both lefthanders and righthanders. On all of your ceiling balls and pass shots, if you don't want them to come off of the sidewall, you must look at yourself from the gallery or imagine your position on the court. This is all done mentally during the rally. You must locate where you are standing and imagine a direct line to the front wall. This imaginary line now makes up your sidewall. If you are four feet from the real sidewall, your imaginary sidewall to the other side of the court is now 16 feet across. Now cut this new distance in half and you have your proper angle to the front wall for your ceiling balls and passing shots. Follow this rule and you can't miss.

R



Incorrect shot (above) has too much angle on the shot and lets opponent cut it off for an easy return.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT: HOW TO BEAT THE BIG MAN AND THE LITTLE MAN

By Lindsay Myers

In sizing up your opponent, there are a few tips to aid you when playing the big man or little man.

When playing a taller opponent, most players have problems moving that guy out of center court. He seems to have set up permanent residency there and he can pick off anything you try to get by him.

What you should be thinking about is your positioning on the court and what shot to make in relation to his position.

Although there are exceptions, taller players are generally slow movers laterally and backwards. They also have trouble with shots close to their body and shots in the corners.

Do not try short angle V-pass shots and the side wall-front wall pinch shot against taller opponents. A big man can almost always handle this type of shot.

Wide pinch shots, if not killed, are readily retrieved by big players who move forward faster than any other direction. If he continuously stays in backcourt, then pinch him.

The best shots against a tall opponent are the "jam" shot straight into the body. Down-the-line and wide-angle passes are good and so are ceiling shots.

The jam shot goes right into your opponent's body and will probably produce a weak return from an awkward position.

The down-the-line shot is a standard shot that can be used against players of any size because it is the shortest route to the front wall. An opponent needs split-second reaction time to cut it off.

The wide-angle pass should be hit from center court and catch the opposite side wall



THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT: HOW TO BEAT THE BIG MAN AND THE LITTLE MAN

at the service line before going into backcourt.

Ceiling balls should usually be used defensively but there are times when playing the tall man that it can be used as an offensive shot. A quick shot to the ceiling during a center court rally should bring the ball right to the big guy's feet with such speed and trajectory that he has to scramble for any kind of return.

Serves which are effective against the big man are low drives to the corners and Z-serves hard into the corners (but not off the back wall).

Now that you can master the Goliaths of the court, we shall discuss how to beat the Davids. Short players also have their advantages that need to be countered.

Being low to the ground gives short players stability and a low center of gravity. You have to be careful of the shorter player who may look out of shape but has an uncanny sense of anticipation. Pro Mike Yellen is one of

those players. While not looking the part, he can make absolutely amazing gets. If, of course, the short opponent is overweight you won't have much to worry about. But when you start getting into the upper ranks, you have to take for granted that nobody is out of shape, tall or short.

Short players rely on speed and agility to cover the court. In this respect, their size is an asset because they generally carry less weight and their reaction time is quicker.

They are usually able to handle hot ground shots into the body and up to eight feet away from their body. But don't forget that their legs are shorter and they have to take more steps to get to the wide shots.

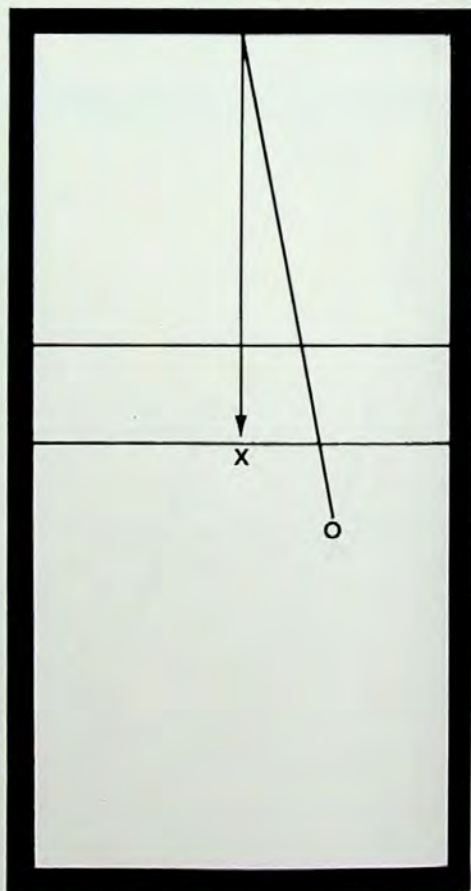
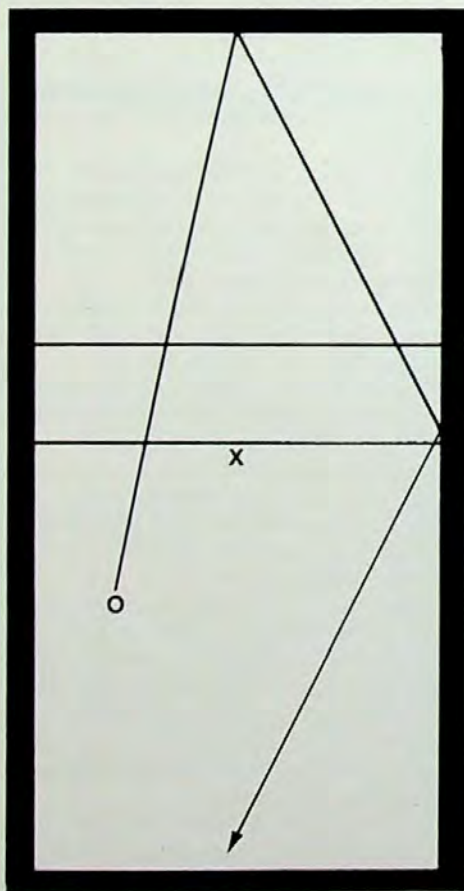
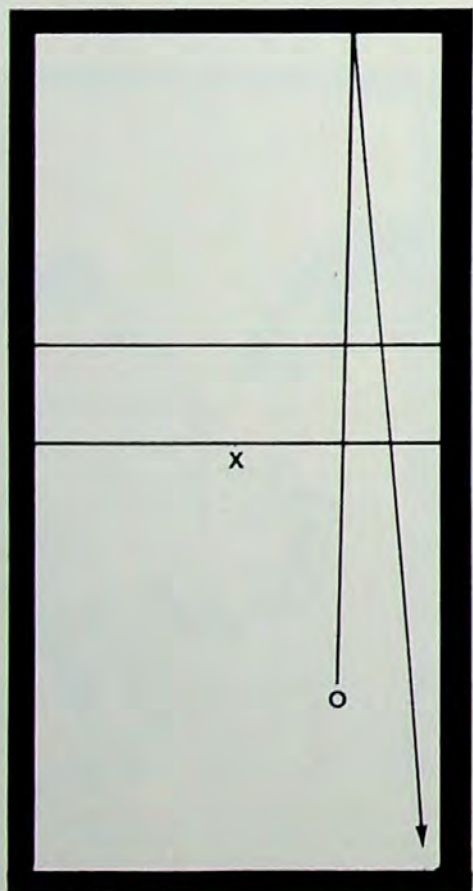
When hitting shots past short players, remember also that their power zone is lower than normal. Keep your passing shots at chest height. But not too hard. You want the

ball to catch the side wall before it goes backcourt.

If you are hitting down-the-line, keep the ball above the low power zone. It should force a weaker return, lessening the chance for them to kill the pass if they even get to it.

"Short players rely on speed and agility to cover the court."

You would think that the next most obvious shot to use on the short player would be the ceiling ball. But I found in the pros that this is



To beat the big man, the author suggests you use down-the-line passing shots (left), wide-angle passes (center) or hit it straight into his body (right).

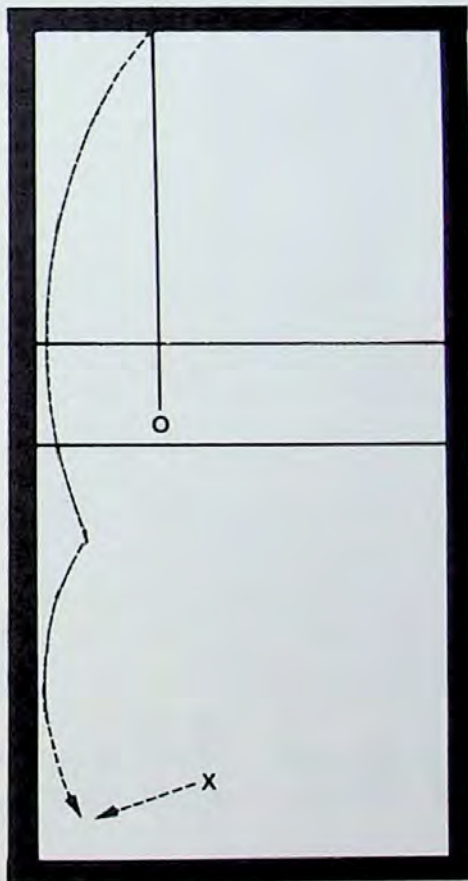
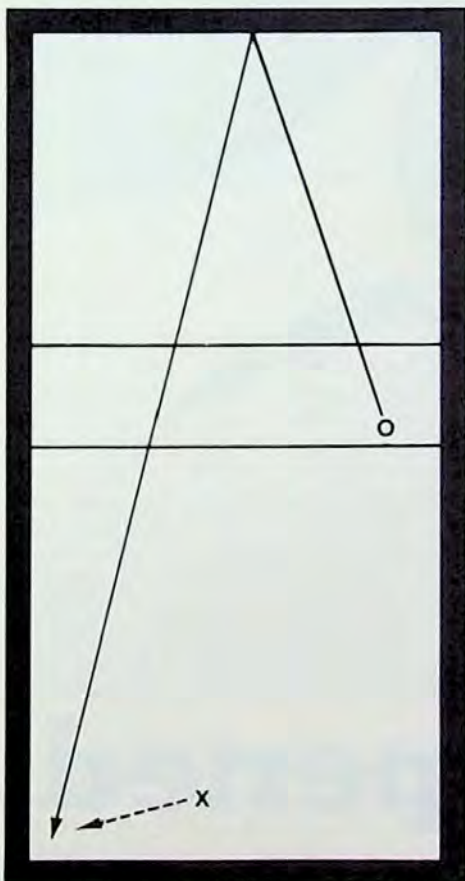
not always so. It is extremely difficult to execute a single perfect ceiling ball much less two or three in a row. In this case I believe the short player has an option. If you hit a short ceiling ball, then you can expect a strong player to get back against the wall and take a good cut at the ball or try to kill or pass it. But if your shot goes even slightly long and off the back wall, your short opponent will be able to get down underneath it and scoop out a good shot. When making a ceiling shot, a shorter player has more room for error than the tall player.

My suggestion is to use an offensive ceiling ball, hitting it up from center court during the rally. If you are in a ceiling ball rally, try a cross-court overhead drive.

By hitting down on the ceiling ball, you will force your opponent to hit up on his return because your shot is rising up to meet him chest or head high.

When serving to a short opponent stand three feet from the right side wall. Now you are in a position for a wide V-drive to the opposite corner which draws the receiver far out of position to the left. Hitting the V-drive wide is the important thing. If it is hit from center court, the drive does not pull your opponent out of position because the angle of the serve is too acute. The same serve hit on the left side of the court is effective on lefties. From the right side of the service zone you can also execute a high lob which lands in the five-foot safety zone and bounces up. This keeps the returner in backcourt and keeps the ball high and out of the short opponent's power zone. The same shot can be hit from the left side of the service zone.

These serves should be used as your basics, but vary the height, speed, and angles as you experiment with them.



To beat the small man, the author suggests use of hard drive serves from an acute angle (left) or high lob serves.

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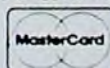
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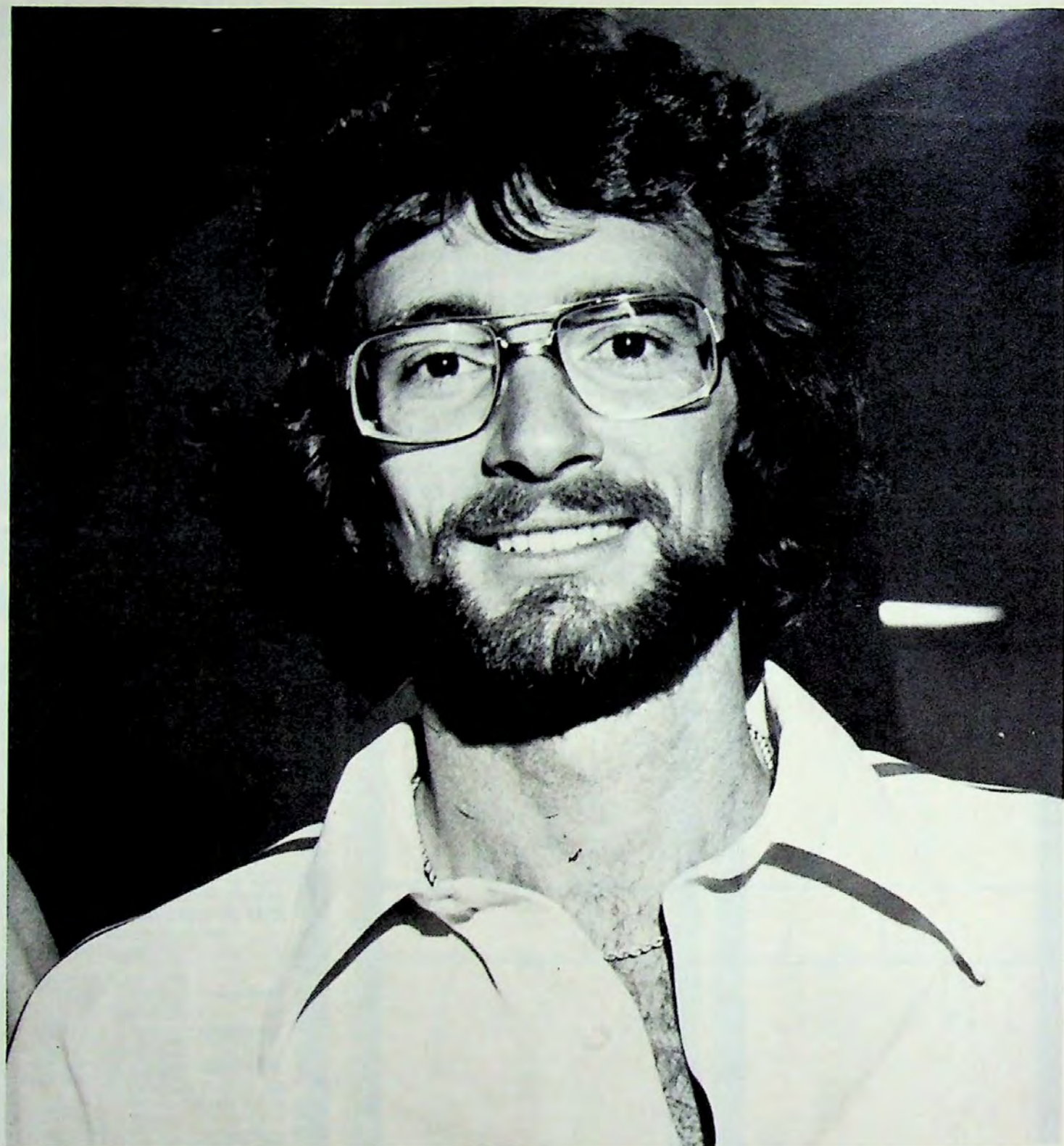
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Whatever Happened To Charlie Brumfield?

By Rick Davis

He's 33 years old now and, yes, in some ways, time has taken its toll on Charlie Brumfield. Sure, he's still quick with the quip, and he probably knows the mechanics of the game better than anyone else, but he's also perhaps a step slower at getting to shots he used to put away.

Appearing trim with 185 pounds spread across a six-foot frame, one might conclude that Brumfield still looks like the professor of racquetball. But professors get old. He was the king in the early and mid-'70s, but even with that unparalleled mixed bag of shots, nobody expects him to do the same thing in the '80s.

Time—or something—put a dent in Brumfield's performance during the 1980-81 season. But while the number of his victories was disappearing off the board, Brumfield was plotting a new direction, as an executive with a racquet company.

"Last season, it got to the point where I would come off the court after winning a match and I'd say to myself, not, 'I won,' but, 'My God, I didn't lose,'" recalls Brumfield. The record bears him out. In six appearances on the 1980-81 National Racquetball Club tour, Brumfield advanced to the quarterfinal round only once. In the other tournaments, he was early history. He carried the number 31 ranking into the Nationals in Tempe, Ariz., and lost to Scott Hawkins in the round of 32. End of season.

"I had less enthusiasm the last couple of years," says Brumfield. "It showed in my performance. It had to. It wasn't my physical condition. I don't think I got out of shape enough to make a difference."

Clearly, 1980-81 was not a good season, as far as wins and losses (and prize money) for the five-time national champion. Moreover, it was a continuation of a slide that began for Brumfield in 1977. He began that season as the number-two ranked player on the NRC tour, but finished in the eighth position at which he stayed for the next two seasons. Then the dramatic decline.

One journalist went so far as to speculate before this year's Nationals that, for Brumfield, "There are no more miracles. He should have retired two years ago." Perhaps, he was right. Secretly, Brumfield well may believe it would take a small miracle for him to win a regular tournament especially in which the high-speed, pressurized ball is used. But if a slower ball were to be used, that may be a different story.

"With the slower ball, there's no question that I'm still the best player," says Brumfield. "Give me even a medium-speed ball and I'll play the top guys for \$25,000 of their own money."

Pro Jerry Hilecher agrees: "With a slower ball, Charlie can beat all of us."

"With the power ball, the control player is never able to return the ball," says Brumfield. "The only truly effective shot is one hit as hard as you possibly can hit it. It's a young man's game now. The stylized game is gone in racquetball."

Brumfield, obviously a little biased on the subject, thinks that racquetball would be better off in general if a slower ball were regularly used rather than a faster ball. He points to television as the main reason.

"In my mind, we've put up a roadblock to getting on television, and we need television to reach potential buyers of the sponsors' products," he says. "With the faster ball, the audience never gets a feel for the rally. It's over before that ever happens. There's less premium on shot selection and strategy because with shorter rallies, there's less opportunity for that. Everyone now has a uni-dimensional attack. Hit the ball as hard as you can a foot high or less off the wall."

"Take a look at tennis. In a rally, a drama develops for the audience. Borg hits a cross-court shot, the crowd sees where the ball is going and they think, okay, will McEnroe get to it, and where will he return it."

"But with the serve and shoot style in

racquetball, no one with another style can compete. In boxing, the stylist can get in the ring against the slugger and beat him by doing his own thing. And look at basketball. Over the years, as there got to be bigger players, the rules changed—no dunking, the addition of the three-point field goal—that was to maintain the integrity of the game."

Is it more than coincidence that the slow ball he advocates would benefit him most? "It's the right ball for the game, and the right ball happens to be right for my style of play," says Brumfield. "But try to sell the slow ball even to the public now. They don't want it because they've been educated to play with the bullet."

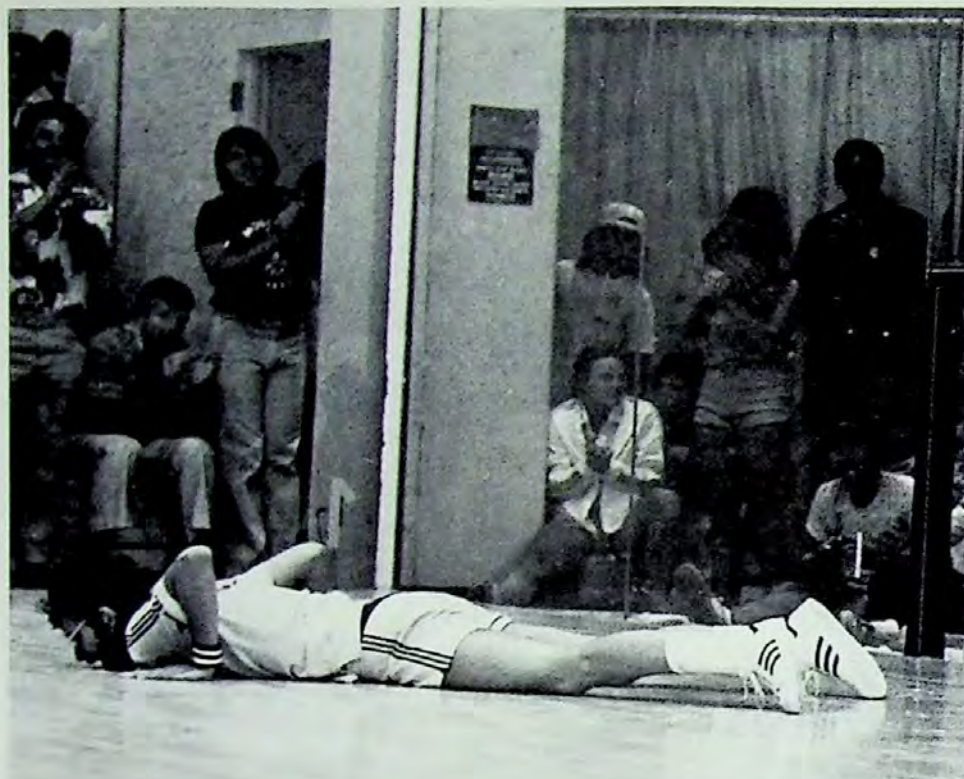
Brumfield may never get the chance to show what he can do with a slow ball. Or for that matter, with any ball. That is due to the change in the format of the pro tour. In the past, the tour has been open to anybody. This time the bulk of the pro stops will be on an



Photo by David M. King

The days when Charlie Brumfield would defeat Mike Yellen (right) or any other highly ranked player seemingly are over. Unless a slow ball is being used. "With a slower ball, there's no question I'm still the best player," says Brumfield.

Whatever Happened To Charlie Brumfield?



"I had less enthusiasm the last couple of years," said Brumfield. "And it showed in my performance."

invitational basis... limited to 12 players (14 counting alternates), and Brumfield is not one of the players invited.

"This is the end of the professional tour as we know it," says Brumfield. "To get the best competition you've got to open it to the best. To take a handpicked list of 12 for the whole season is not a just situation. It's been done at the expense of having bad feelings generally among the pros."

Brumfield says he will not be hurt as much as some of the other players because he makes most of his income from areas other than the pro tour.

His income sources include several endorsement contracts, the biggest of which is with a relatively new racquetball company, Geostar. Brumfield had been sponsored by DP Leach for most of his career but he couldn't reach agreement with the company last season, and he opted for a new contract with a new company.

Brumfield obviously was concerned with his long-range plans, as he realizes his future was not on the competitive level, but on a managerial level. Enter Geostar, which originally was based in Scottsdale, Ariz., but recently moved its headquarters to San Diego, Calif., Brumfield's home.

As Geostar's touring pro, Brumfield will still be playing in tournaments when he can but the bulk of his duties coincide with his new title, vice president for sales and promotions. He will give clinics and exhibitions for the

new company and will be involved in promoting 37 amateur tournaments that Geostar is sponsoring.

But doesn't he realize that Geostar will be competing with other, more established companies who have had a head start in controlling the market? "One of my duties is to convince retailers that they should sell our products," says Brumfield. "I think Geostar has the potential to be number one in two or three years."

For Brumfield, his new position is perhaps the final phase of his racquetball career. Over the years, he has invested his earnings in real estate to substantially increase his assets. Last year, he, his wife Pat and son Conor (13 months old) moved into a home in Rancho Santa Fe, an exclusive community in northern San Diego County. They have started to raise Arabian horses, presently pasturing two mares (one in foal) and a young colt named Charlie's Choice.

It's easy to sense that Charlie is enthusiastically digging into his new job with Geostar. He won the singles title and shared the doubles crown in his first Geostar-sponsored tournament recently. Some of the old fire is back.

"I really don't believe age is a deterrent to winning, if you stay in shape and I have," he says. "But lack of enthusiasm is a deterrent and I have had less enthusiasm the last couple of years on the tour. It showed in my performance. Maybe I can regain that spark by taking this step (with Geostar)."



Although Brumfield for the first time won't be matching shots with the tour regulars, he intends to remain competitive.

"When I do play, and I plan to play nearly every day with exhibitions, tournaments and at clubs I visit, I'll be very competitive," he says.

Still, he knows it's not the same as being in there against Marty Hogan or Mike Yellen or some of the young lions. "I'll miss that part," says Brumfield. "There's something about competing against the best in the country. I'll miss that opportunity to challenge myself to reach that pinnacle. It's also unfortunate that some others who deserve the chance won't get it."

ACUPRESSURE AND BODY BALANCING

By Lynda Huey

Dr. Leroy Perry of Pasadena, Calif. has become a respected chiropractor to many of America's top athletes. Golfers bring him their aching backs, tennis players and racquetball players bring him their strained elbows, and swimmers, football players and track athletes show him an assortment of ailments. Athletes of every sort flock to him for preventive medicine techniques, body-balancing and treatment of athletic injuries.

In recent months, Dr. Perry has looked deeply into the area of unilateral activities—sports such as racquetball that tend to overdevelop one side of the body. These sports pose problems to the athletes' bodies and to the chiropractors and physicians who treat them.

"Racquetball isn't any more injurious or beneficial to the body than most racquet sports," says Perry. "A lot of people think that there are more elbow, wrist and shoulder injuries in racquetball due to the rapidity and repetition of the stroke. But the only major difference is that the players sometimes run into the walls causing head, neck and shoulder injuries.

"The basic problem with unilateral sports such as javelin throwing, bowling, tennis, baseball, football and racquetball is that day in and day out the primary muscles are developed on only one side of the body. This means that the athlete is experiencing habitual unilateral development in the shoulder girdle muscles, the upper back, the mid-back, the pectoralis and the latissimus dorsi muscles on the dominant side. Lop-sided posture occurs."

Take the case of professional tennis player Stan Smith, one of Perry's patients. Over the years, Smith's right-sided dominance has altered his posture so that his right shoulder is a full three and a half inches lower than his left.

Dr. Leroy Perry shows patient upper body acupressure points: Where the head of the collar bone meets the sternum (top); where the deltoid muscle meets the pectoralis muscle (center), and at the base of the skull.

Photos by Ea Ikuta





The lower body acupressure points: An inch above and to the side of the navel (left), outside of the thighs (center) and at the inner border of the knee. Stimulation of these points aids in coordination and balancing of the muscles.

"That's not uncommon," Perry says. "If an athlete's muscles are too developed on the right side, causing the right arm and shoulder to drop, then you'll find the athlete leaning back to the left from the hips in order to compensate. That leads to a tremendous ten-

dency for lower back instability. That instability can lead to intervertebral disc problems, neuritis (i.e., sciatica), subluxations (dislocations), or all typical strain and sprain syndromes."

According to Perry, uneven muscular devel-

opment on one side of the upper body pulls that side of the body out of alignment. The vertebrae of the middle (thoracic) and lower (lumbar) back start leaning in the opposite direction to counteract the off-balance stance of the body when standing erect. And when



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the spine habitually curves in compensation, problems occur from the wedging effect to the intervertebral discs.

Does this mean that all racquetball players have to worry about developing a lop-sided anatomy?

"You can't say that everybody who plays racquetball will have a spinal curvature," says Perry, "but the occurrence of over-dominance is tremendous. And that cuts down the athlete's ability to continue competing in the sport at a high level."

So what do you do? How do you enjoy racquetball, yet avoid the physical problems that accompany unilateral activity?

Dr. Perry says that a player should, first, start with a preventive medicine exercise program. Players should learn to hit all regular strokes with their non-dominant hand. Righthanded players would then do a "pre-warm up" for 15 minutes with their left hand prior to their regular warm up. This includes all serves, forehand, backhand and ceiling shots. All normal movements should be included during this portion of the preventive rehabilitation training. According to Perry, most racquetball players don't realize how important their lower body is to the game and therefore only warm up their upper bodies. Total body warm up is recommended after the pre-warm up.

Body flexibility is also important. Achieving full-range of motion of all the body's joints cuts down on the possibility of strain or injury. Perry recommends yoga as a vehicle to attain limberness and a more balanced body.

Besides the above tips for training, Dr. Perry recommends Parent Kinetic Therapy Points that are used with acupressure to help balance muscle dominance from side to side and front to back. Acupressure is derived from the ancient medicinal practice of acupuncture—sticking fine needles into specific spots on the body and vibrating those needles to produce stimulation to the area. Eastern medicine believes that the body's energies flow up and down vertical lines in the body called meridians. When a blockage of life energy occurs along these pathways, the body's well-being is hampered. Thus, by stimulating key spots along the meridians, the blockage can be released and the energy flow restored. Acupressure uses pressure from the fingers and thumbs rather than needles and therefore its effects are subtler. But it uses the same road map of the body's meridians and the same key spots.

There are six such points in the upper body and six similar points in the lower body. Two of each are considered the "primary" points and should be stimulated with rotary massage before any of the other four are touched.

In the upper body, the primary points lie just below the point where the head of the clavicle (collar bone) meets the sternum (breast bone). When massaged, this area is usually tender.

This indicates a blockage and the need of stimulation. After these points are massaged, attention can be given to the others. The curve of the anterior deltoid muscle meets the pectoralis muscle at a second set of points. The third set of points is at the base of the skull where the upper trapezius muscles attach. Work all six points with a rotary massage.

The primary points for the lower body are located an inch above and to the side of the naval. Again, these spots can generally be found by locating tenderness in the area. A second set of points resides in an area approximately three inches long on the outside of the thighs. This area is just below where the hands touch the legs in the normal upright position. The final set of acupressure spots for the lower body are on the inner border of the knee. Stimulation of all of these points in the proper order aids in coordination and balancing of the muscles.

"Acupressure is not nearly as effective as acupuncture," says Perry. "But you can usually get good effects using these stimulatory points in conjunction with activity. These points can be massaged in a rotary manner before, during and after the activity."

"Once all of the Parent Kinetic Therapy Points have been worked, the central nervous system has been placed on alert. Then other acupressure spots on the extremities will respond with more peripheral nerve awareness."

For instance, if an athlete wishes to aid coordination and muscle balance in the right arm, begin the acupressure with the two primary points where the clavicle meets the sternum. Then massage the other four points that are for general upper body balance. Finally, the peripheral point that deals specifically with the elbow and shoulder can be worked. That point lies two inches from the elbow on the top of the forearm. This acupressure application followed by movement combines to produce kinetic therapy for the body. The nerves receive a message, then the body helps solidify the message.

"Another technique in kinetic therapy is the Origin/Insertion Spindle Technique," says Perry. "First you stimulate the origin and insertion of the muscle group in question, then push the belly of the muscles together lengthwise, moving with the fibers. Since muscles work in pair—one contracts while the other relaxes—coordination of those antagonistic pairs is ultra-important. This Origin/Insertion Spindle Technique helps re-establish normalcy of any muscle group with its antagonistic opposite. That assures better fluid coordination."

"Anyone can do this technique. It's very uncomplicated. Just look up the muscles in *Gray's Anatomy* and apply the concept to any muscle group. It's phenomenally preventative."



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A Special Sport For A Special Bunch Of Athletes



Instructor Steve Grosslight and Los Angeles Dodger first baseman Steve Garvey prepare to teach racquetball to a young athlete as part of 1981 California Special Olympics on the UCLA campus.

By Barry Colman

Something very special goes on with the Special Olympics, and the introduction of racquetball as a demonstration sport at the 1981 California Special Olympics on the UCLA campus was just as special. The young athletes were there, the parents were there, interested observers were there, racquetball instructors were there and even Los Angeles Dodger first baseman Steve Garvey was there straddling a boy's crutches while showing him how to hold a racquet.

Most of the action took place at Drake Stadium on the Westwood campus where young bodies pushed themselves to the limit to win a medal or two. A couple of hundred yards away, in an inconspicuous block building located behind UCLA's Pauley Pavilion,

something else was going on. Young retarded athletes were being introduced to the game of racquetball.

"The retarded have always been told, 'You can't do it,'" says Vicky Tolley, state program director for California. "Special Olympics says, 'You can do it. All you need is a chance.'"

Special Olympics is basically a year-round sports training and physical fitness program started by the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation in 1968. One of the Kennedys, Rosemary, excelled in sports despite the fact that she was retarded. "Because of Rosemary the Kennedy Foundation decided to help the mentally retarded," says Tolley.

The first Special Olympics was held in 1968 at Soldier Field in Chicago. "Over a thousand athletes came from all over the country," recalls Tolley. "Rafer Johnson led the oath and a lot of notable athletes were

there. The program has grown from a handful of athletes to over a million around the world."

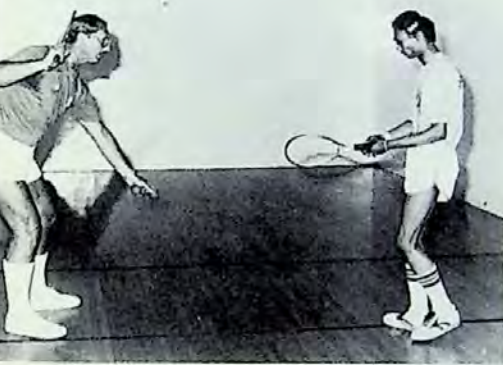
There are Special Olympics programs in over 40 nations now, from Australia to Japan, from Ghana to Guatemala. Before an event can be fully accepted as part of the program, it has to go through an evolution. It is first introduced as a demonstration sport, then it is subjected to study and experimentation in other states and countries and official recognition as a competitive sport. Sports presently accepted include track and field, volleyball, gymnastics, roller skating, basketball, swimming, and soccer. Although racquetball is still a demonstration sport, it has been very well received, and Tolley thinks it will soon become sanctioned.

Racquetball joined the Special Olympics program this year thanks mainly to the Mid Valley Athletic Club in Reseda, Calif. The club



Photos by David M. King

"The teaching was intense and tedious but immediately gratifying," said Garvey and the other instructors.



donated equipment and several of its club officials and instructors donated their time to supervise and teach the athletes. The people at Mid Valley also interested Garvey in helping out.

Garvey and the Mid Valley instructors found the teaching "intense and tedious but immediately gratifying." Each of the five courts had two instructors teaching five athletes. Of the 30 minutes allotted to each group, 20 minutes was filled with instruction and 10 minutes with actual playing time.

As in any class, some students were quicker to learn than others. Some could engage in a short game after only a few minutes of instruction. Others needed more work on technique. But one thing that was uniform was the attitude. The instructors tried to make each player feel like a champion, and the athletes ate it up. Said one sponsor, "Our coaches were amazed at how fast they picked it up. It was like getting their batteries charged."

The average Special Olympian is hard to identify. Athletes of all races, sexes and religions turned out for the racquetball instruction. But you couldn't mistake the enjoyment.

Take the young, thin seemingly non-athletic girl who arrived outfitted in a yellow T-shirt, baseball pants and a cap that said Camarillo State Hospital. She missed her first three shots and then connected with the ball and sent it off to the side wall. It wasn't a great shot but you should have seen her smile. It was contagious. The instructor smiled. Then everybody smiled. It was almost as if she had accomplished everything she had set out to do.

"Everybody here is a winner," says Mid Valley athletic director Dave Crowley. "And they are all different. There's one who is off at 10,000 miles an hour and there's another in slow motion. But racquetball has provided them with the opportunity to become extroverted, experience something new and bring people out of their shell. This has opened a new world for them."

In the past, people hesitated to get involved with the Special Olympics because of some fear that the athletes had something contagious. But, as with everything, it takes time to educate an ignorant public. "Mental retardation is not contagious. It's all right to touch," says Crowley, who had previously participated in a Red Cross swimming program with another bunch of retarded kids. "We had our instructor who said he was only going to stay a half-hour. He's been here all day."

Another problem, says Crowley, rests with parents. "Sometimes parents can be overprotective. They need to let the youngsters go but they hold them back. Sometimes you just want to strangle some sense into the parents."

"It's common with all parents to hold back their children and the parents of mentally retarded children even more so," says Tolley. "Everyone, including people in the medical profession, was being overprotective at first."

Prior to the evolution of the Special Olympics, it was reasoned that mentally retarded

children would get disoriented if they traveled to compete. It was also suggested that the retarded child wouldn't know the difference between winning and losing. Those presumptions proved to be fallacies.

"Now we have Special Olympians breaking records," says Tolley. "One of our high jumpers jumped as high as the silver medalist in the Olympics at the turn of the century."

Tolley notices how the public has changed its attitude toward the students. But it took time. "I used to take groups to the park and people would grab their children and run away. Now people are becoming more accepting. All it took was a little exposure."

"Some mentally retarded people can live alone and are self-sufficient in a controlled environment," says Crowley. "Special Olympics is part of that training."

Politicians, actors, singers and athletes have also donated their time and money for the Special Olympics. The list includes Muhammad Ali, Arthur Ashe, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, Mac Davis, Sally Struthers, Christopher Reeve, Barbra Streisand and Garvey.

"By showing celebrity support we encourage the kids," says Garvey, who spent time leading one of the racquetball instruction groups.

Although Garvey is a tennis fanatic, racquetball is still one of his hobbies. During the baseball strike, Garvey could be found at Mid Valley staying in shape by playing some racquetball. One could see that he also enjoyed teaching the Special Olympians.

"Racquetball has a small playing area where you can see quick results," said Garvey. "This went over well. The kids picked it up real fast."

Garvey is not the only baseball star to take a special interest in the Special Olympics. New York Yankee pitcher Ron Guidry, who lives in Louisiana, is another who gets involved. At the home of Guidry's mother only two awards hang on the wall. One is Guidry's Cy Young honor as the best pitcher in the American League. The other is a Special Olympics medal won by Ron's brother Travis.

"I believe it took more character and sheer guts for Travis to win his medal than for me to win the Cy Young," Guidry has been quoted as saying.

Other states are now talking about adding racquetball to their Special Olympics programs. Even other cities in California are ready to start a program. "We'd start a racquetball league if someone would donate court time and equipment," said a special education instructor from Fresno. "The kids really enjoyed it. But we need sponsors to keep it going," said another from Northern California.

And how did the young athletes like it? "I was nervous at first," said Nancy Philhower, who was wearing a 60-yard-dash gold medal around her neck. "But next year I want to enter the racquetball competition."

And said one sponsor, "When I told the youngsters about racquetball, they wanted to play. No hesitation. They got really excited. Racquetball is a sport they would have missed if not for the Special Olympics."

SERVING UP RACQUETBALL DISHES

Trapper John, M.D., co-star Brian Mitchell, a gourmet cook, offers a special yogurt menu for players.

By Denis Yaro

The home is strewn with evidence of creativity. A piano and an impressive stereo system dominate the living room and the furniture and unique art pieces add an element of class to the environment. Today, however, the senses are provoked by the aroma emanating from the kitchen. It is here that actor Brian Mitchell is creatively exercising his culinary talents.

Mitchell, 23, co-stars as Jackpot Jackson on the CBS television series *Trapper John, M.D.*, and he has also found time to develop a talent for gourmet cooking.

Mitchell began cooking when he found himself in a position familiar to young bachelors. "I started cooking out of necessity when I moved away from home," he recalls. "There wasn't Mom or anyone else around to cook food, so I had to learn it myself."

But before he took the gourmet cooking trail, his specialty was, of all things, tuna fish. "I do wonders with tuna fish," says Mitchell. "I've found eight million different ways to make it and with some you'd never guess it was even made with tuna fish."

When not cooking or acting, Mitchell can often be found on the racquetball court. Though he has participated in several sports, racquetball remains his favorite. "I always come back to racquetball because it's challenging," he says. "Everything's working—your mind, your body, everything."

With that in mind, Mitchell decided to combine his racquetball and cooking interests.

In a special cooking session for *Racquetball Illustrated*, Mitchell served up three dishes using yogurt as the common denominator. The main course is "Healthy Wok Stir Fry Vegetables with Yogurt Sauce." The thirst quencher is "Pina Colada Yogurt Shake" and the piece de resistance is "Light Lemon-Berry Yogurt Pie."

"I'm a dessert person," says Mitchell, who also gets some cooking ideas from his two older brothers, both of whom also have a talent for the kitchen.

But despite his penchant for cooking, acting and playing racquetball, it was music that wound him up first. He began taking piano lessons at the age of six and has continued his musical education ever since. He recently completed a film scoring course at UCLA and he has even sung the national anthem in front of a near-capacity crowd at a Los Angeles Dodger game.



Actor Brian Mitchell puts the finishing touches on a Pina Colada Yogurt Shake (right) and begins to enjoy his meal specially designed for racquetball players.

The transition to acting came in high school when he had to make a choice between a drama class and a chorus class. "It seemed as if I had taken chorus every year of my life and when it got to the point of choosing between the two, I decided that if I had to take another chorus class I would scream. So I decided on drama."

Mitchell was born in Seattle but because his father was employed by the United States Navy, he ended up living in Guam, the Philippines and eventually San Diego. It was in San Diego that Mitchell officially became a professional actor. "The first thing I ever got paid for was a very small chorus role in *Camelot* in





Photos by David M. King

"I can't stand playing people who don't care," says Mitchell. "I want to play somebody who wants to win as badly as I do."

San Diego," says Mitchell. "I guess I was about 16 or 17 years old. I had about two lines. My pay was probably about 10 cents an hour counting rehearsal time."

It was also in San Diego where Mitchell first learned racquetball. "I started playing in high school, although I really didn't get into it until a couple of years ago," says Mitchell. "We used to play on outdoor courts. Now I'm spoiled. With four walls, you don't have to chase the ball all the time."

Mitchell usually finds time to play racquetball twice a week and has begun to play in celebrity tournaments. "Yeah, I would say I'm competitive," he says. "It's actually hard for me to judge that but my family and friends say I'm competitive. I can't stand playing people who don't care. I want to play somebody who wants to win as badly as I do."

As for the future, Mitchell says he will continue to play in racquetball tournaments and he will continue his musical and acting careers. In fact, he hopes one day to write, produce, direct, score and act in his own motion picture.

"Really, I'm very content where I am right now. I never set strict goals for myself. I just kind of keep in mind where I want to go, and I seem to go there."

"I've been fortunate. Since I started working I've never been out of work for longer than two or three months."

And he says he will also continue trying out new recipes in the kitchen. That is, when there is an audience around to enjoy his dishes. "I really don't find a whole lot of time to cook. As a matter of fact, I hate to cook for myself," says Mitchell. "I like to cook for two or more people. It's so much work to prepare a meal that I guess I want to have other people appreciate it."



Healthy Wok Stir Fry Vegetables With Yogurt Sauce

- 1 bunch of broccoli flowerettes
- 6 green onions
- 1 medium-sized zucchini
- 1 large carrot, shredded
- ½ bell pepper, finely chopped
- ½ lb. mushrooms
- 1 10 oz. package of fettucini
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 cloves fresh garlic
- ½ tsp. ginger
- 1 tbs. curry powder
- cayenne pepper to taste

Wash vegetables and cut into diagonal bite-sized pieces. Heat one tablespoon sesame or peanut oil in wok, and saute vegetables individually with a small amount of soy sauce for about 3-4 minutes or until just tender but still crisp. Toss together, then add spices and simmer for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with cashew pieces. Fold over cooked fettucini or use as a side dish with yogurt sauce.

Yogurt Sauce

- 1 cup chutney
- 1 tbs. brown sugar
- 1 tbs. dried mustard
- ½ cup plain yogurt

Bring first three ingredients to boil in a small saucepan. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Fold in yogurt and serve on the side with fettucini.

"This is a delicious and versatile combination of vegetables, equally suitable as a side dish or main course," says Mitchell. "Different vegetables may be substituted as preferred, but it is the sauce that gives this dish its unique quality—an interesting blend of ingredients producing an Oriental sweet and sour effect."

Pina Colada Yogurt Shake

- 1 cup finely chopped canned pineapple
- ½ cup pineapple-coconut juice
- 1 raw egg (optional)
- ½ cup plain yogurt
- 2 tbs. protein powder
- ¾ cup vanilla ice milk (3 heaping tbs.)
- 2 tbs. (or more) rum—for after-game libation

Mix pineapple, banana, yogurt and rum (if desired) in blender until smooth. Add egg, protein powder and ice milk, being careful not to overblend as ice milk will become thin. If you like the drink sweeter, use ½ cup pina-colada yogurt and one dallop of honey. If

added thickness is desired, add additional ice milk. If you want the drink to be thinner, add one ice cube in blender. Serve in a tall glass and garnish with fresh pineapple.

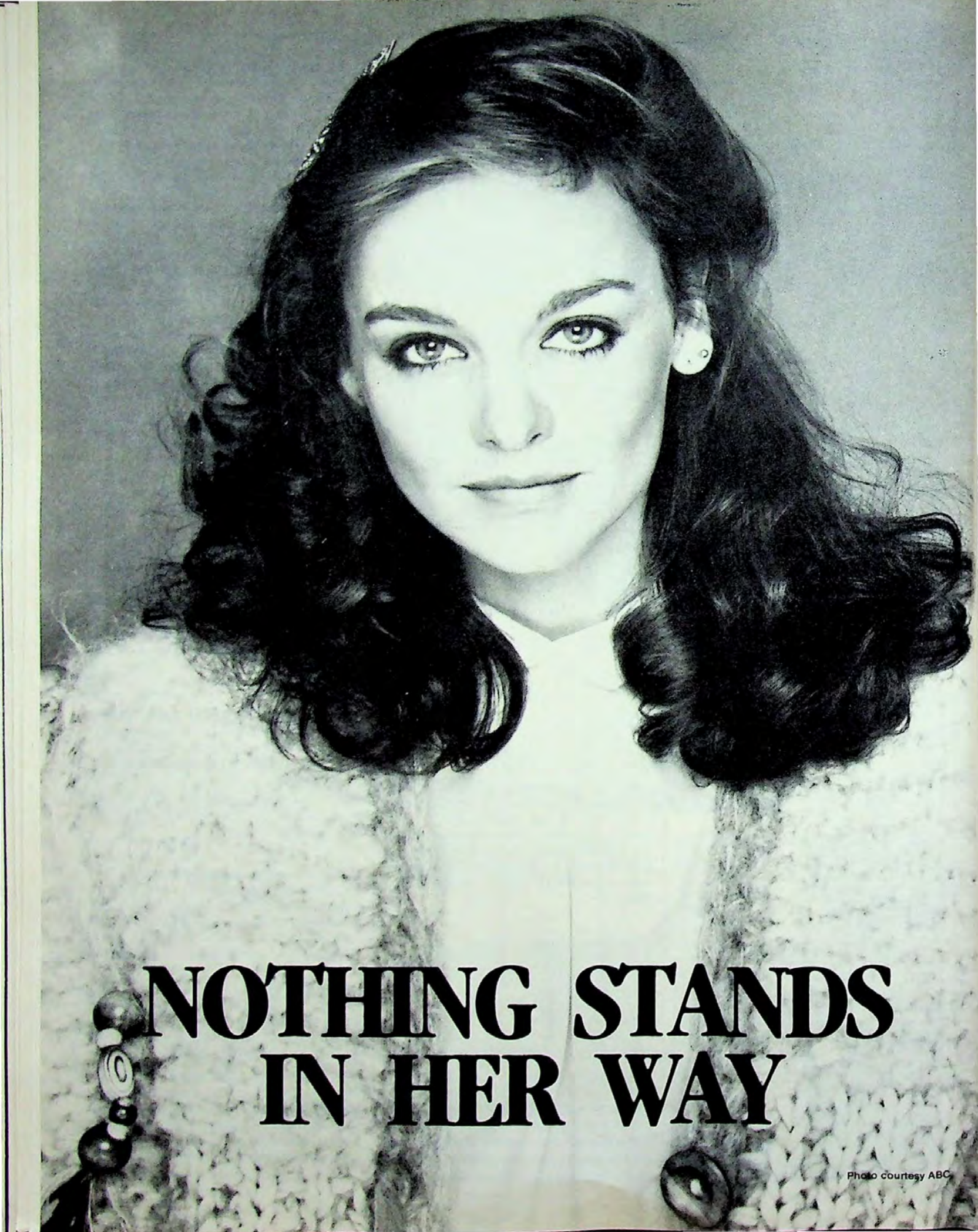
"It's terrific as a pick-me-up after a tough racquetball game and serves perfectly well as a summer cocktail (with or without the rum)," says Mitchell.

Light Lemon-Berry Yogurt Pie

- 1 Graham cracker crust
- 1 8 oz. carton of lemon yogurt
- 4 oz. whipped cream or imitation whipped cream
- 2 cups fresh blueberries or blueberry pie filling

Beat whipping cream until stiff, but not dry, and fold into yogurt. Fold one cup blueberries into this mixture. Pour into pie crust. Decorate top of pie with remaining berries. Freeze. Thaw one hour before serving.

"The key word in the recipe is light, says Mitchell. "There's always room for an extra helping. This recipe is just as versatile as the vegetable dish. Different fruits and yogurt flavors may be substituted as long as the same proportions are maintained."



**NOTHING STANDS
IN HER WAY**

Photo courtesy ABC



Photo by David M. King

Pamela Sue Martin, who plays the role of Fallon in *Dynasty*, has a rugged racquetball match with movie director Steve Miner at The Racquet Centre in Universal City, Calif.

By Michele Kort

When Pamela Sue Martin undertakes something, there ain't no maybes, as the saying goes. Like racquetball, for instance. When the actress took up the sport a couple of years ago, she wasn't content just to bat the ball around once in a while for recreation. No, she was out on a court not far from her home in Studio City, Calif. three times a week, playing mostly with men who were a lot better than she was. And she had a major handicap: a nasty nicotine habit.

"I'd go gasping off the court," says Martin, who plays Fallon Carrington on ABC's popular nighttime soap, *Dynasty*. "I worked up such a sweat it looked as if I were going to have a coronary."

After three or four months of that rather unhealthy racquetball regime, Martin quit the sport, and only recently started playing again—as a nonsmoker. "Now I feel I can approach it on a more realistic level, because I think you cannot be a smoker and player racquetball. It's ridiculous."

Reaching a "realistic level" in all parts of her life seems to be Martin's overriding goal, especially as her age pushes toward the 30 mark (she's 28). On a purely physical plane, she's realized that the late '20s are a time when the dispensations of youth are lost

Pamela Sue Martin of ABC's *Dynasty* has a "clear and determined" approach to her career and to racquetball.

forever. "There's a point at which your body simply doesn't maintain itself unless you put a certain amount of effort into it," says Martin. "I have to get exercise every day. Emotionally I couldn't live without it. It gives you more energy. I don't feel as tired, I don't feel as nervous, I don't feel as highstrung. Racquetball makes me feel the same way."

One can imagine how a young actress would become highstrung under the demands of a weekly television series. But *Dynasty*, in which Martin is but one of several leading characters, is a lark compared to her earlier experience as the star of *Nancy Drew Mysteries* in the mid-'70s. "Nancy Drew was a joke," she says. "That was my own show and it was just grueling. I was the first one in and the last one to leave every day, and weekends we'd film till midnight. I was in every shot; it was just horrendous."

The character of Fallon, daughter of millionaire businessman Blake Carrington (John Forsythe), is also quite different from that of a sweet teenage detective. Fallon's a spoiled brat, and a woman who manipulates men

with her sexual wiles. "I don't know how I feel about playing someone who's antagonistic and sort of abrasive," says Martin, "but people get a kick out of it. I want to make sure that that kind of spark, that intensity, continues to exist. Because it's a soap, things change sometimes, but I think that people want to see the character stay the same. And I do too."

Martin says she doesn't draw on her own experience to form her characterizations, yet she must have grown up around women not unlike Fallon. Her home town of Westport, Conn. (which also lays claim to an actress Martin much admires, Bette Davis) is a very wealthy suburb of New York City. "It's like the Bel Air of the East Coast in a way," she says. "I don't think I grew up in an environment that was unbelievably wealthy, but I was not an underprivileged child—let's put it that way."

She took up a modeling career in New York City while still a high school student, and before graduating had starred as "a fat little kid" in the movie *To Find A Man*. Her modeling fees were being saved for a college education, but the lure of Hollywood proved too strong. "I was offered a film out there," she explains, "and that cut deeply into my college experience."

Martin appeared in the *Poseidon Adventure*, and has since starred in four other films—*Buster and Billie*, *Our Time*, *Lady in*

NOTHING STANDS IN HER WAY

Red, and the yet-to-be-released *Flicks*. Except for the first, none have made much of a box office impact, and Martin's fame so far has been garnered on TV instead of the silver screen.

Although she did make something of a splash in the print media when she posed for a *Playboy* layout, she looks annoyed when the subject is broached. "That's ancient history and boring," scoffs Martin. "It's one stupid thing I did and people make such a fuss—unbelievable!"

Pamela Sue would rather be remembered for a much more serious endeavor she plunged into after *Nancy Drew*: her role as a spokesperson for the environmental protection organization, Greenpeace. In a demonstration against the worldwide slaughter of whales, she went with Greenpeace on an expedition to Newfoundland and stepped out on the ice with the late Congressman Leo Ryan (who was soon after murdered in Jonestown).

"Then I did all the talk shows and went around the country talking about it," she explains. "I devoted about six months to it." One person who saw Martin on a talk show at that time remembers her obvious commitment to the topic of the environment, despite distracting questions from the host about her outfit or hairdo or latest romance. "She'd always turn it around to talking about Greenpeace and the whales," recalls a friend.

The time between *Nancy Drew* and *Dynasty* was also one in which Martin discovered the joys of the Sierra mountain range in Central California, where she now has a cabin. There are no racquetball courts up there, but she stays fit with noncompetitive sports activities such as hiking, camping, skiing, and canoeing.

There is no need for Martin to keep score when she's schussing down a ski slope or paddling along a mountain stream, but she's unabashedly competitive when she steps onto a racquetball court. And she admits that one of the factors which put a dent into her first foray into racquetball was the inequality between her and her more experienced male opponents. "When you're playing competitively for points and you're always losing, it tends to crush the spirit, you know? Once you're keeping score, I think it's ingrained in us as children—competition and your score is important. In a capitalist society, competition is the name of the game," she says.

But would she ever purposefully undermine her game to protect a sensitive male ego? Answered the spunky Martin: "I would try to win regardless."

Like many others, Martin sees racquetball as being more accessible to people than another favorite racquet pastime of hers, tennis. "I think racquetball is a game that people can pick up readily if they have eye-to-ball coordination and can be quick," she says. "It doesn't seem to take years of evolving a special style. In certain sports, there's a





Photos by David M. King and ABC

"I've always been able to do what I wanted," says Martin. "I think if you are clear and determined, then nothing really stands in your way."

stage you have to pass in order to play at all. For example, in skiing there's a stage where there's so much effort required just to learn not to break your butt. But in racquetball you can start flailing away. Now that might be my naivete and my ignorance which speaks, but it seems to me if you're halfway coordinated you can get out and start to play."

Although she rarely gives interviews, Martin is charming and opinionated when she does talk to the press. But normally she considers

being interviewed a problematic endeavor: "I tell somebody exactly the way I feel about something, and I think those are the kinds of things you do over dinner with a friend. If you keep doing it over and over in an interview, you begin to be robbed of your own self."

An area in which she isn't particularly self-conscious, she claims, is her acting. Martin says she works from an instinctual rather than introspective base.

"I tend to use things much more on an

immediate level. If the woman that I'm playing is indignant or angry or sad or happy, I do it. But I don't go beyond that. I don't use experience and living patterns and what my life has been about. I know that there are people who analytically use something in a certain way, but I don't."

"And I really don't like to talk about it that much, because I can't stand it when people sit around and talk about how they act. I think that art is something that's inspired, and if you want to sit around and write books about it, fine, but I don't want to read them."

Her escape from the Hollywood scene is usually the mountains, but even in Los Angeles, Martin strives to separate her work from her social life. "I have a lot of friends here that are in my business," she says, "but we don't necessarily talk about it. You just have to move away from it sometime."

"But I can't complain," she continues. "I really like my life, I like my work, I like almost everybody I meet. I've got great friends, and I like this town. But it's taken 10 years of trying to balance things all the time. The not-working periods are as important, if not more important, than the times when I'm working. Because when I'm working I'm putting out and I'm not taking much in. And I only put out from what I build up when I'm not working."

A large part of that balance is achieved by maintaining her sports and exercise disciplines. She admits, though, that it's hard to keep it up when she's working.

"I always say, 'Oh, I'm going to play racquetball or tennis three times a week and I'm gonna run and I'm gonna get up and do jumping jacks.' Then I get to the point where I just go to work and don't care about anything."

As for her acting future, Martin says she wants to play all sorts of roles, but she prefers "strong women." And it would be hard for her to deny her resemblance to that type of character. When asked if she has always been stubborn about doing what she wanted to do, she responded:

"I've always been able to do what I wanted to do. I never had to fight. I think if you're clear and determined, and what you do is positive and constructive and you're not afraid, then nothing really stands in your way."

And there ain't no maybes about that.



RACQUETBALL. These photos demonstrate how the ROTATOR duplicates the movements of the wrist and forearm during the swing. This allows conditioning of the pronator and supinator muscles in exactly the way they will be used during competition.

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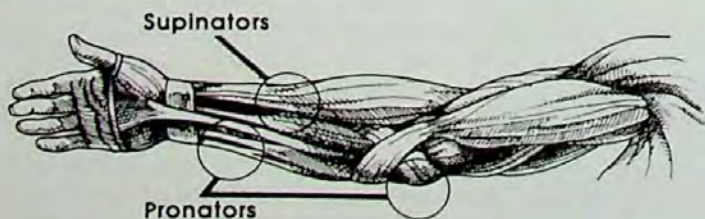
Imagine the ball coming off the back wall... low... and to your back-hand side. You're ready, wrist cocked. You uncoil and as the racquet makes contact with the ball, your wrist snaps, blasting a passing shot that catches your opponent flat-footed. It's a tough shot that requires power, speed and control.

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Short Shots

Women Players

Women players make up 43 percent of the racquetball population, according to the July 1981 issue of *The Sporting Goods Dealer*.

In a regular section titled "Monthly Sports Census," the magazine reported that as of April 1981, there were 6.49 million racquetball players and of those, 2.8 million were women.

The study indicated that racquetball had actually dropped a little in popularity from the month before. The March study indicated that 7.68 million racquetball players were on the courts.

(These figures differ from the 1976-77 Nielsen study which stated that there were over 10 million players.)

According to the magazine, women players recorded a higher percentage of participation in April 1981 in bowling, swimming, tennis, exercise, roller skating and gymnastics than men.

The largest area of women racquetball players was said to be in the North Central and Northeast regions.

The study tracked the participation patterns of 10,097 individuals during a 30-day activity period.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

New Management

The WPRA has signed an agreement with International Management Group (IMG) for representation on the pro tour.

The signing resulted from the resignation of commissioner Dan Seaton in July.

Seaton, who works in the district attorney's office in Las Vegas, Nev., said he finally had to make a decision between the two positions. "Because of my duties in the D.A.'s office, I was frequently called upon to work during my so-called off-hours," said Seaton. "Too many times I passed up these responsibilities so I could utilize my time for the WPRA. . . The time had come for me to make a choice."

"My goal had always been to make the WPRA financially self-sufficient so it could pay a commissioner's salary that would allow me to leave the D.A.'s office and work full-time for the WPRA," said Seaton. "Unfortunately, we were unable to achieve that goal and I was forced to leave."

Japan's Magazine

With racquetball developing on an international basis, it was inevitable that other countries would start their own racquetball publications.

Enter *The Racquetball*, a 12-page color publication put out in Japan.

The slick tabloid newspaper contains color illustrations, instruction articles, and features. *Racquetball Illustrated* editor Ben Kalb has been asked to write a regular column each issue.

IMG, headed by "superagent" Mark McCormack, is one of the most respected sports organizations in the world. Buffy Gorden will be the IMG representative handling WPRA activities. She will be working with the WPRA Board of Directors, headed by president Fran Davis.

IRSA Formed

The National Court Clubs Association and the National Tennis Association have combined to form the International Racquet Sports Association and will represent over 800 racquet clubs internationally.

"We couldn't be happier with the new arrangement," says Norm Cates, IRSA's new president and president of the Court-south racquetball club chain in Georgia.

The merger was designed to combine services that both organizations were providing separately for their members. "The truth is that over 60 percent of NTA members had racquetball courts in their clubs and the overlap was tremendous," says Cates. "Why should owners have to

choose between the NCCA and NTA when they are all seeking the same basic information?"

Former NCCA executive director Chuck Leve has been retained as IRSA central regional director and national sales director.

Shorter Shots

A new poster urging eye safety in racquet sports with the theme "Give Your Sporting Eyes A Chance" is available from the National Society to Prevent Blindness. The 12-inch by 18-inch two-color poster is available at \$1 per copy, or two for \$1.75. Write: 79 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. . .

Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed a contract to endorse DynaCam health equipment. . .

Jon McClory has been named president of the Court Players Corporation of Southfield, Mich., operators of 11 clubs in Michigan and Indiana. . .

The 1982 Women's Professional Racquetball Association Nationals will be held in May at Celebrity Courts in Warwick, R.I.



CLUB NEWS

RIO GRANDE YACHT AND SPORTING CLUB Albuquerque, New Mexico

One would expect an establishment calling itself the Rio Grande Yacht and Sporting Club to be located next to a large body of water where its members could pop out the back door and set sail. Wrong. "There's no water around here for miles," says the club's public relations consultant, Linda Blocki. "The owners just figured it would be a good name."

Located about a block from the Albuquerque International Airport, the Rio Grande club has eight courts and an adjoining restaurant. "I'll bet we are one of the few clubs in the country to have a nice, fancy sit-down restaurant as part of the club," says Blocki. "And I don't mean those small little health bars that most clubs pass off as restaurants."

The club was built by Craddock Development Company of Colorado Springs, Colo. At present there are no weight equipment facilities but plans are in the making to add a pool, weight room and indoor track in an area across the street from the existing facility.

The interior of the club is done in earth tones with "Southwestern-style furniture" and plenty of plants. Rust-color suede covers the lobby. According to Blocki, the locker rooms are something to see with stained wood lockers, a whirlpool with skylight above and green jade decorated showers. "All members use oversized Canon towels, not those small, cheap things most clubs have."

The club has a free racquetball clinic for members once a week. There are also nutrition classes, exercise classes and video machines for instructional use. Club racquetball instructors are Eric Sanchez and Terry Tanner.

NAUTILUS RACQUETBALL CENTER Waynesville, North Carolina

The Nautilus and Fitness Racquetball Center in Waynesville, N.C. is located in the famed Smokey Mountains about 35 miles west of Asheville and not too far from the Tennessee border.

The club has a complete Nautilus room but only two racquetball courts. "Originally we were just a fitness facility but there was such a demand for racquetball that we had to add it," says co-owner Don Davies. "We have room to put in three more courts without buying any more land and we'll do that if racquetball goes

over the way we think it will."

The club also has separate hot tub rooms for men and women but Davies admits "we've had a lot of people asking us to make it coed."

Waynesville has a population of only 15,000 and the entire county totals about 45,000, but because of the Smokey Mountains, the area is popular for tourists. "We had marathon runner Craig Virgin in here the other day," says Davies.

Davies says the club has a mixture of families and singles and seems to have become a "meeting place for every attorney and doctor in town."

The club is planning a group outing next year to nearby Knoxville, Tenn. for the proposed World's Fair.

BEACHES RACQUETBALL CLUB Neptune Beach, Florida

Located about 20 miles from Jacksonville, Neptune Beach, Fla. is a tourist area that attracts many Floridians and others from the South. As a result, the Beaches

Racquetball Club has a lot of tourists dropping by after they get tired of sunbathing.

The club, located about a block from the beach near several hotels and motels, has six racquetball courts and six tennis courts. "This is a kind of laid back area," says club pro Susan Morgan. "We have a lot of families here but also a lot of singles."

The club also features Nautilus equipment, an aerobic dance room, juice bar and the other usual amenities.

One of the most popular activities is the ladies traveling league in which club members compete against players of other nearby clubs.

The volleyball program is also a big hit with club members. "We enter a team once a year in the big beach tournament they have down here," says Morgan.

Beaches Racquetball Club is located near a popular shopping center, so a lot of its members learned of the club by walking in after an afternoon of shopping.

The club also holds regular tournaments. Robert Grossman and Karen Fry were winners of the last one.



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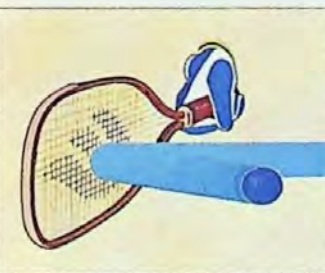
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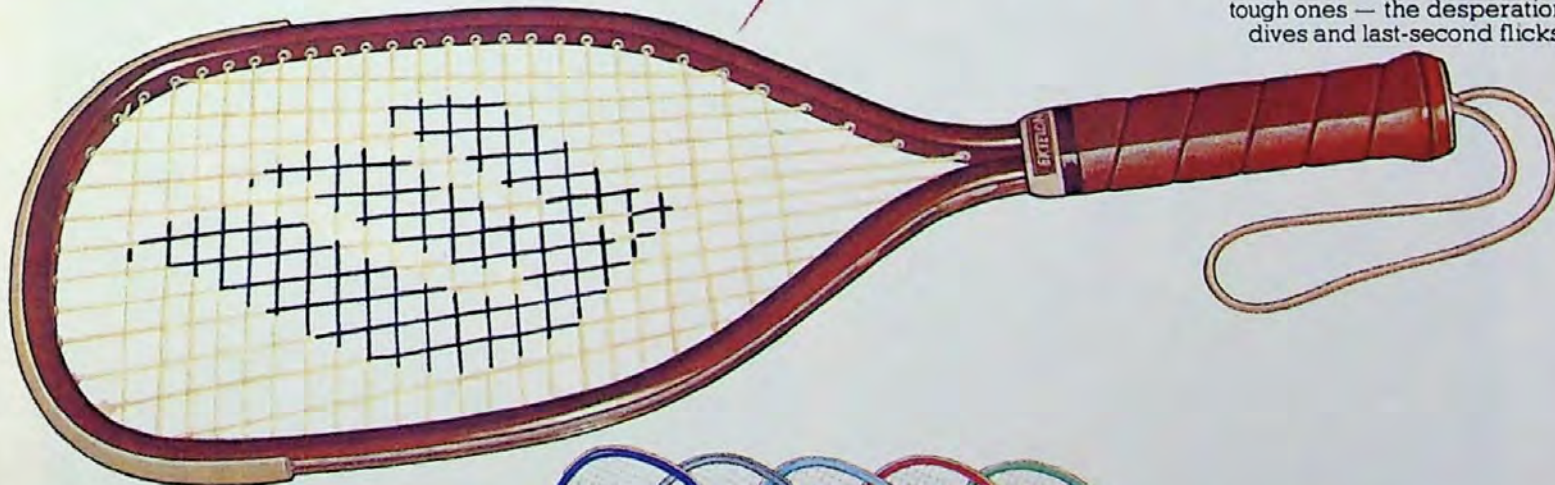


Quicker Reactions.

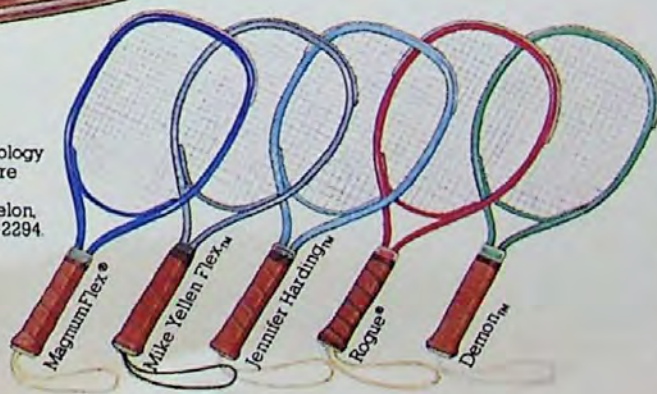
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TOURNAMENTS

World Games I

By Carole C. George

"If I was prone to paranoia, I'd think somebody was trying to make us fail, as if there was a giant conspiracy to keep World Games I a secret," said John Bragg, executive director of the first World Games, which was held recently in Santa Clara, Calif.

The World Games came off somewhat successfully but the expected eruption of the media coverage and general hoopla was little more than a fizzle. Not even the baseball strike got the sportswriters out of their cubicles and into Santa Clara.

One reason for lack of national coverage was the fact that the United States Olympic Committee scheduled its annual sports festival in Syracuse, N.Y., for the same week. ABC-TV decided on Syracuse, not Santa Clara, thereby limiting tube coverage to a few local newscasts.

"There is a very good possibility," said Bragg, "that because the International Olympic Committee was so powerful and offered such a highly sought after event, they could imply that anyone who doesn't play within the rules will suffer. The IOC plays that game very well."



Photos by Carole C. George

Ed Andrews prepares to take shot off back wall on his way to victory over fellow American Mark Martino in men's singles finals of World Games I.

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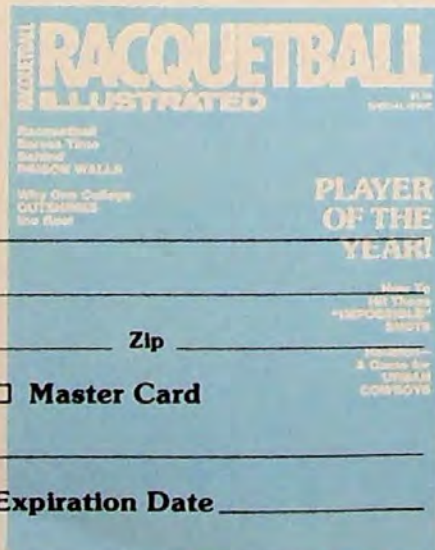
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TOURNAMENTS



Han van der Heijden, president of the IARF, awards second place doubles trophy to Mirjam Wieheesen of Holland.

Actually, the World Games was never meant to be a threat to the Olympics. Instead, it was an outgrowth of the Olympics, organized by the non-Olympic federations of the General Assembly of International Sports Federations as early as 1974. The ISF thought that the IOC had gotten too big for its britches and wouldn't let anyone else into the Olympics. Sports such as badminton, tae kwon do, bowling, casting, roller skating, and racquetball are all popular as participant sports but excluded from the Olympics partly due to economics and politics.

The World Games also differ from the Olympics in its non-nationalistic philosophy. There are no anthems, no national flags, no national team scoring, and no closing ceremonies. The athletes are housed by sport rather than country. If all goes well, the World Games will be held every odd-numbered year but will not conflict with the Olympics. They will be set up in existing sports facilities and housing, so there won't be an enormous financial burden on the host city. World Games I was held mainly at the University of Santa Clara, utilizing the dorms, cafeteria and athletic facilities.

But one thing that will have to be taken into account the next time around is the lack of publicity. The marketing firm, Global Sports Marketing, fired a Los Angeles-based PR firm without the consent of the organizing committee. Advance media coverage was near non-existent and consequently, the ticket sales did not go as well as anticipated. But that could be expected when only \$20,000 of an already meager budget of \$700,000 was allocated to promotions.

As far as the racquetball portion of World Games I is concerned, this was the first real attempt at international exposure. And it seemed successful. The Netherlands is negotiating with the World Games committee to purchase video tapes of the racquetball com-

petition. And VISNEWS out of England, which broadcasts to 650 million viewers in over 100 countries, ran a segment on racquetball. The ticket sales were a sell-out on the first day of racquetball competition, but there were only 200 seats available for viewing at the Decathlon Club.

As Han van der Heijden, president of the International Amateur Racquetball Federation, admitted, the first World Racquetball Championships had a "humble beginning," but it was also a historic event that will never be forgotten—at least not by the participants and coaches who came from three continents and six countries (U.S.A., Mexico, Holland, West Germany, Ireland, and Japan).

"People just don't realize how important this is," said Ed Andrews, U.S.A., who captured the first men's world title by defending another American, Mark Martino, in the finals. "I strongly believe that the future of our sport is right here. Racquetball is stagnant in the United States with court clubs going under and very few new players. We need foreign money and foreign players."

The foreign players were just as enthusiastic about having the opportunity to take part in the first international competition, even though many of them would barely qualify for the "C" division of a tournament in the United States. Michikane "Ken" Ishiguro, who is the best Japanese player, was impressed by the caliber of play in the U.S. He says he sometimes drives three or four hours to compete against Americans stationed in Japan, but Andrews, Martino, and the rest of the U.S. team were the best he had seen.

Many of the matches were cakewalks for the more experienced U.S. players. The women's divisions were sadly lacking full teams from some of the countries. But what really made this tournament so different from any other was the obvious international brotherhood and sisterhood. Bridin Uí Mhaolagáin, the coach for the Irish women, was running around putting shamrock stickers on all the players and inviting them to a party complete with Irish whiskey and biscuits. The Japanese team adopted Larry Fox's style of wearing bandanas as headbands. Scott Shaefer, an alternate for the U.S. team, shared headphones with one of the Japanese players, so they could listen to the Beatles on a portable Sony. And everyone got in on T-shirt trading.

But as with many tournaments, this one was not without its controversy. Racquetball was not originally going to be allowed into the World Games because only 13 countries belong to the IARF and also because racquetball has never had a legitimate world championship. It was just a matter of luck that van der Heijden ran into an old hockey friend who was able to pull some strings and get racquetball accepted as an "observer" sport. That meant that racquetball would be included in the brochures and publicity but wouldn't receive any money from the World



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Japanese racquetball team take pictures of the awards ceremonies. Event took place in Santa Clara, Calif.

Games as a full-fledged member, mainly because people such as Dr. Bud Muehleisen, the U.S.A. coach, and representatives from the American Amateur Racquetball Association, Luke St. Onge and Hallie Singer, were well organized and didn't give the organizing committee any problems. "I know we could have sold a lot more tickets if there had been more room," said Bragg. "But TV people who filmed the event were still pleased with the way everything was handled."

Everything, perhaps, but the limited number of countries which participated in racquetball. Finances were a big factor because in many cases it was up to the individual players to pay their own travel expenses. Even Lydia Emerick of Colorado, a member of the women's team, decided not to attend because she would have to pay her own expenses. So it was understandable that Switzerland, Venezuela, and Israel decided not to send a team. The two West Germans, Willy Wenzel and Jorg Harnold, had to pay their own way and make a vacation out of it because the German Racquetball Federation would not put up the money. They were the entire team and actually had never met each other until they arrived in California.

One surprise was that Canada was not in attendance. Other than Mexico, which has several good players, Canada was the only other country expected to challenge the American team. But Canada chose not to become a member of the IARF and only sent one person to the World Games to act as an

observer. According to St. Onge, the Canadians were disillusioned with the politics of American racquetball. St. Onge thinks the Canadians will soon join the IARF.

If the IARF expects to increase its membership, the first thing it has to do is hang on to the members it has. During the World Championships, which preceded the actual World Games, the Irish team almost packed up and went home. Originally, the teams were to have five men and five women playing three positions of singles and one team of doubles. Ireland's team solicited \$10,000 from PMPA, the largest insurance company in Ireland, and bought a full team and coaches. Other countries only brought partial teams and then were allowed to use their singles players for doubles as well. Then, forfeits were not given to players who had no opponent from certain countries. It wasn't until after the awards ceremony that the injustice was corrected and the Irish women were moved into second place instead of third.

But in the end, all of the players felt like part of one big happy family. It was a little sad to say good-bye to all the new friends, but also exciting to think of all the new possibilities for racquetball in their own countries. Fox, the only American to lose a match, said farewell with a smile: "Even if I didn't win one single match, I wouldn't have missed this for anything. It was the greatest tournament I've ever been involved with. . . much better than playing pro."

Results:

Men's Singles: Ed Andrews (U.S.) def. Mark Martino (U.S.), 21-19, 21-5. Bronze medal: Martin Padilla (Mex.) def. Larry Fox (U.S.), 16-21, 21-18, 15-14.

Men's Doubles: Mark Malowitz-Jeff Kwartler (U.S.) def. Raul Canales-Federico Alvarez (Mex.), 21-7, 18-21, 15-1. Bronze Medal: Tonny Luyckx-Frits Groenend (Holland) def. William Wenzel-Jorg Harnold (W. Germany), 21-6, 21-19.

Women's Singles: Cindy Baxter (U.S.) def. Barbara Faulkenberry (U.S.), 21-6, 18-21, 15-2. Bronze medal: Betsy Massie (U.S.) def. Mirjam Wielheesen (Holland), 21-10, 21-0.

Women's Doubles: Mary Ann Cluess-Karen Borge (U.S.) def. Mirjam Wielheesen-Dineke Kool (Holland), 21-13, 21-9. Bronze medal: Susana Martinez-Armida Suarez (Mex.) def. Catherine Donegan-Mavis O'Toole, 21-5, 21-1.

IARF WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS (Sponsored by Penn and Miller Lite)

1. U.S.A., 39 points.
2. Mexico, 25 points.
3. Holland, 23 points.
4. Ireland, 15 points.
5. Japan, 6 points.
6. W. Germany, 3 points.

Etc.

● Steve Ledford defeated Mark Miller, 7-15, 15-10, 15-8, to win the men's open of the Oklahoma Grand Prix-TRAC Summer Open at the Tulsa Racquetball Club. Jerry Gage won the men's advanced division and the 17-under division. Enos Stover won the veterans title. Carol Goddard defeated Sharie Doshier in the women's open division. Susan Johnson was the women's advanced champion.

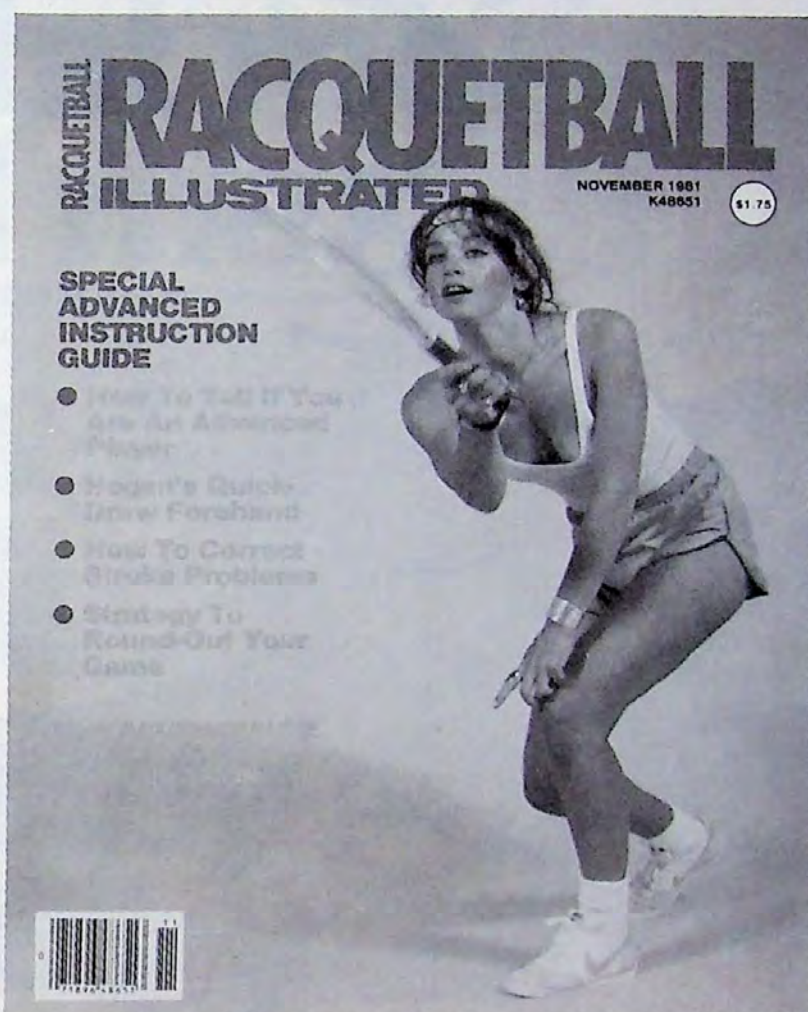
● David Mathews defeated John Milano to win the men's open in the Pasco Area tournament at Richey Racquet Club in Port Richey, Fla. Stu Bandel and Sally Chase won the B divisions.

● Scott Nelson defeated Mike Phillips, 21-18, 10-21, 15-14, and Sharon Davis defeated Dianna Stolpmann, 21-8, 21-11, in the open division finals of the Club Championships at Imperial Courts in Melbourne, Fla.

● Spalding-Self tournament schedule: October 9-11, Centre Courts, Rockville Center, Long Island, N.Y.; Oct. 23-25, Killshot Ltd., Bloomingdale, Ill.; Nov. 13-15, Racquetball Center, Atlanta, Ga.; Jan. 1-3, Franklin Racquet Club, Detroit, Mich.; Jan. 15-17, Bay Club, San Francisco, Calif. February 1982 (Championships), Los Caballeros Racquet Club, Fountain Valley (Los Angeles), Calif. Top prizes in open divisions will be new Datsun automobiles.

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