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Racquetball Magazine welcomes submissions from our members and readers. If you have an idea for an article you may discuss your topic with the editor either by email or telephone. Contact: [magazine@usra.org](mailto:magazine@usra.org)  
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Fourteen (yes, 14!) courts ... no waiting! The 2014 USA Racquetball National Championship series kicks off in just a few short months, with a return to the Tempe campus of ASU, February 12-16, for National Doubles. Offering dozens of skill, age and combined doubles divisions, now is the time to take your game to the next level with a national title bid. See you there!



**CONTENTS**

**IN THIS ISSUE**

<b>3</b>	<i>From the Executive Director</i>	<b>17</b>	<i>Military Racquetball</i>
<b>4</b>	<i>From the President</i>	<b>20</b>	<i>Interview with Coach Kelly Beane</i>
<b>6</b>	<i>Wilson Junior Olympics</i>	<b>24</b>	<i>Fran's House</i>
<b>8</b>	<i>International Racquetball Tour</i>	<b>26</b>	<i>What's The Call?</i>
<b>10</b>	<i>Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour</i>	<b>28</b>	<i>Industry Update</i>
<b>12</b>	<i>World Outdoor, NPRA</i>	<b>38</b>	<i>Events Calendar</i>
<b>14</b>	<i>Women's Senior / Masters Racquetball</i>	<b>39</b>	<i>US Team Report</i>
<b>16</b>	<i>National Masters Racquetball</i>	<b>40</b>	<i>International Update</i>

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## MISSION STATEMENT

USA Racquetball is the National Governing Body for the sport of racquetball, recognized by the USA Olympic Committee, and is committed to excellence and service to our members. We provide the infrastructure and organization for racquetball. We also provide competitive opportunities for members and enthusiasts through our coordination of racquetball organizations, development and administration of rules and programs, sanctioning of events and development of teams for international competition.

## VISION STATEMENT

To provide opportunities in the sport of racquetball for all levels of participation through:

### Objectives:

- **MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT** – USAR values its members and will strive to provide the best possible member services at all levels.
- **MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT** – USAR believes that racquetball is a lifetime endeavor and the benefits of health, recreation, and competition should be available to everyone. USAR will strive to expand its membership in order to share these benefits with as many players and supporters as possible.
- **PROMOTION OF THE SPORT** – in order to sustain a strong player base USAR will promote the numerous benefits of participation through mass marketing efforts.
- **COMPETITIVE SUCCESS** – USAR strives to maintain America's position as the number one racquetball nation in the world. Success at the elite levels has a positive influence on every other facet of our sport.
- **SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS** – USAR values its relationship with sponsors and will continue to maximize benefits and exposure.



FROM THE  
**Executive Director**

# Coming Together

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."*

-HELEN KELLER

**W**hen I joined USA Racquetball earlier this year (without much background in "the business"), one of my first tasks was to visit with the many various stakeholders, to gain their perspective on the sport, as well as their opinions about the best path forward. These individuals represented tournament organizers, competitors, facility owners and management, instructors, manufacturers, as well as state, national, and international associations. My outreach efforts in this regard are still in high gear.

Strikingly, almost everyone I spoke with highlighted, in one way or another, what they perceived to be the fragmented nature of the sport – and the significant impediment that presents to moving forward and improving the state of racquetball on the whole. Placing great stock in these broad-based yet consistent perspectives, I've come to consider working to unify the sport around a shared vision for the future to be a pivotal role for USA Racquetball. After all, what organization - other than the non-profit National Governing Body - would be better suited for such an undertaking?

It's premature to say exactly where we - as USA Racquetball, and as an industry - are heading, but what I can say is that USAR is committed to making every effort to collaborate with industry partners in a way that helps to unify the sport.

Progress in this area will help align individual and organizational goals, greatly improving our collective outlook relative to growth and improvement. Of course, in the end, all of this is focused on the individual experience of racquetball players worldwide.

USA Racquetball has already taken some important steps toward this unification. We're taking a look at long-term agreements with the International Racquetball Tour, World Outdoor Racquetball, and R2 Sports that will help build a strong foundation on which the industry can focus their shared goals. We are also actively working with a dynamic group of State Association representatives to help shape relationships that will benefit the sport for years to come. You can rest assured that many more such agreements and partnerships will follow.

Certainly you, as a player, can (and should!) assist with these efforts by sharing your ideas and insights about how you interact with everyday opponents, new players, organizers, and management at the facilities where you enjoy the game. How do you help foster a collaborative environment that focuses on the long-term health of racquetball? It's quite likely that you frequently have more impact than you realize ... so start thinking about even more and better ways to create positive response for the game!

## USA RACQUETBALL 2012-13 INDOOR SEASON STATS

<i>Number of sanctioned tournaments:</i> <b>431</b>	<b>12,072</b> <i>tournament participants</i>	<b>84%</b> <b>16%</b> <i>Men</i> <i>Women</i>	<i>Most tournaments played (men): 22</i> <b>JANSEN ALLEN</b> - Rice, TX <b>MITCH POSNER</b> - Little Falls, NJ
<i>State with most participants:</i> <b>CALIFORNIA</b> (1,093)	<i>State with fewest participants:</i> <b>VERMONT</b> (2)	<i>State with most participants per capita:</i> <b>OREGON</b> (678 OF 3.8 MILLION)	<i>Most tournaments played (women): 16</i> <b>T.J. BAUMBAUGH</b> – Reston, VA <b>MARY LARSON</b> – Dallas, TX



## UPCOMING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

**NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
**FEBRUARY 12-16, 2014**  
**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**TEMPE, AZ**

**NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
**FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 2, 2014**  
**MULTNOMAH ATHLETIC CLUB**  
**PORTLAND, OR**

**NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
**MARCH 11-15, 2014**  
**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**RALEIGH, NC**

**NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
**MAY 21-25, 2014**  
**MERIDIAN SPORTS CLUB**  
**FULLERTON, CA**



## FROM THE President

By Larry Haemmerle, President  
USAR Board of Directors

**I**hope everyone enjoys the information from our industry partners in this issue, and I thought it would be worthwhile to add some related insights of my own here. At most events, conversations about equipment are a close second to our match play, past and present. Up and coming players are constantly seeking out information on equipment and - while I'd hardly consider myself an expert – I've tracked and read plenty of research on the topic and have developed some opinions. So, the following are my perspectives, based on many years of being involved with our sport.

In racquetball, no piece of equipment provokes more lively debate than the racquet. Whether the topic is weight, balance or shape, you can find a wealth of information regarding the technical aspects of the latest sticks. The truth is, racquets have a limited lifespan. Even if you remove the technical evolution offered in the manufacturing process (as frames are improved and re-designed each season) all materials will wear out when subjected to flex and impact. This can be exacerbated when racquets are subjected to extreme temperature changes. Living in Colorado, I would never leave my equipment in a car trunk or garage, regardless of the time of year.

So deciding when you need a new racquet isn't as simple as it seems. As the frame materials do start to break down, it will begin to affect your performance in ways that might not be readily apparent. One rule of thumb I use is the quality of racquet performance after I restring. If it doesn't have a livelier feel, I know I'm ready for a new frame. In spite of looking like it's in great condition, the fibers and resins are beginning to break down and the racquet is starting to feel dead. For another test (as long as your stringing is close to the tension and stock string from the factory), you can also hit with a newer version of the same racquet and compare. As your racquet begins to degrade, the change won't be readily noticeable since it's a very gradual process. But if you hit with a new frame of the same model, you may be shocked at the difference.

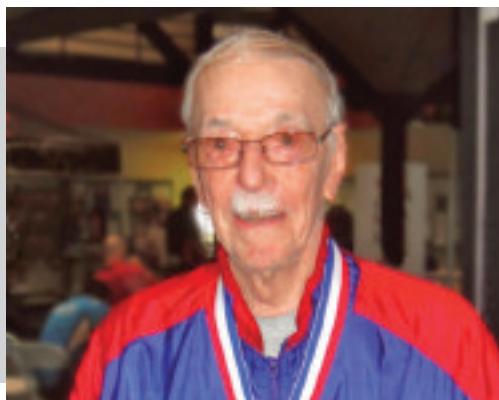
I usually swap out yearly. I may have hit the same model, with 18 months on it, and it may play fair, but it won't do as well as a newer racquet. I'm an older player and I'm sure many others won't get the same usage that I do (playing 3-4 days a week, 2-3 hours a session); however, two years is the maximum.

There are many ways to demo racquets to see if they hit more crisply, as well as play-test the technical improvements. I know a very experienced competitor who took great pride in having played with the same racquet for 5-6 years. He finally tried a new frame and was shocked at the how much better it performed – and immediately placed an order for two new ones.

Restrung is another interesting and debated topic, often based solely on personal preference. Various schools of thought address the best string, gauge, pattern, tension, and frequency – but it's my opinion that many players simply don't restrung often enough (some only if-and-when their strings break). I rarely break strings. Those who know me attribute that to my age. I prefer to think it's due to my masterfully centered ball contact, but it's more likely because I restrung before my strings show significant wear. I regularly inspect them for wear, excessive notching, color changes or movement. If you don't restrung regularly, you're more likely to break strings at an inopportune time and then have to rely on quality stringing from a stranger during an event. I carry three racquets and rotate them regularly to play it safe. Swapping out your grommet kit regularly can also increase the life of your string and avoid premature breakage.

I'm always surprised at competitive players who use the same ball well past its useful life. We've all stepped onto the court with someone who wants to play with a ball that is slicker than the top of my head. There is a reason most tournaments swap out balls at the end of each match. You may get a few sessions out of a ball, but you're not getting the same consistency if you keep it too long. This is another personal preference, but I'll start with a new ball for any 2-3 hour session, plus I like to

(continued on page 36)



### In Memoriam...

**I**t is with great sorrow that we share the passing of one of USA Racquetball's oldest members and competitors, Ben Marshall, who was featured in the Summer issue. Retired US Army **Colonel Ben Fridge Marshall** passed away in San Antonio on September 8 after a brief illness.



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# Junior OLYMPICS

■ By Steve Czarnecki  
Photos by Jim Hiser

**E**arlier this summer nearly 150 of the nation's top junior players gathered at the Oakmoor Racquet and Fitness Center in Des Moines, Iowa, for five days of heated racquetball competition that would determine the USA Racquetball 2013 U.S. Junior National Team. The 40th edition of the Wilson National Junior Olympic Championships did not disappoint.

Thanks to a great job of hosting by the Iowa Racquetball Association and the Oakmoor Racquet and Fitness Center, the Championships were a hit among players and their families. The Olympic format makes it a fun event, regardless of skill level, and local organizers certainly brought out the renowned Midwestern hospitality. Even the weather cooperated with unseasonably cool temperatures for the week.

The Boys and Girls 18 and under singles divisions identified the top American juniors. Among the boys, 25 eager participants entered the draw and all four top seeds played to their rankings to reach the quarterfinals. In the first semi, Connor Laffey upset Nick Riffel in three games, avenging a loss in the finals of the National High School Championships. On the other side of the draw, top-seeded Adam Manilla moved on to the finals with a two-game win over Zack Wertz. In the finals, Manilla claimed the top U.S. roster spot by defeating Laffey in straight games.

On the girl's side, Kelani Bailey and Samantha Simmons came in as favorites to play for the title and when they did, it marked the third straight year that the doubles partners squared off in a Junior Olympics singles final. Bailey won a tight first game 15-12 and went on to close it out against Simmons, allowing only 5 points in the second. In doing so, Bailey finished off a stellar Junior Olympics career with her fifth straight age division title. Having won the 2013 National Intercollegiate Championships as a freshman, she's showing no signs of slowing down.

Once named in Des Moines, the U.S. Junior National Team (see roster on page 18) gathered a month later for a National Training Camp at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. There, Head Coach Kelley Beane and assistants Jim Hiser, Jen Meyer, Nick Montalbano, and trainer Jody Nance challenged the players to up their games a notch, in preparation for the Junior World Championships in Sucre, Bolivia in October. At their camp, the players not only focused on their individual play but also on supporting each other and coming together as a cohesive team.

Twelve Junior Team members are currently preparing for the involved and expensive trip to Bolivia to represent the United States. Please consider making a donation to help them have an experience of a lifetime as they carry the American flag in Bolivia. Donations can be made at [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com).



Boy's Singles 18 and Under Division runner-up Connor Laffey and champion Adam Manilla



Girl's Singles 18 and Under Division champion Kelani Bailey and runner-up Samantha Simmons



Junior All-American Award recipients proudly display their certificates.

## ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

**GIRL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**  
**KELANI BAILEY**

**BOY ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**  
**MARKIE ROJAS**

**SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD**  
**BRIANA JACQUET**

**ESPRIT BOY ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**  
**BRIAN BARBERIS**

**ESPRIT GIRL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**  
**KAITLYN BOYLE**

## ALL AMERICANS

Division	First Name	Last Name	Division	First Name	Last Name	Division	First Name	Last Name
B12D	Cayden	Akins	B12G	Sebastian	Fernandez	G8	Stella	Pearson
B10G	Tommy	Andraos	B8G	Ariaan-Thor	Ghatate	B10G	Akul	Ramayani
B14G	Wayne	Antone IV	B10G	Cole	Hartman	B18G	Nicholas	Riffel
G18G	Kelani	Bailey	G8M	Raina	Hartman	B12G	Antonio	Rojas
B14G	Jordan	Barth	G6M	Sage	Hartman	B16G	Mauro	Rojas
B16G	Justus	Benson	B8MG	Benjamin	Horner	G16G	Hollie	Scott
B6MG	Tyler	Beugen	G12D	Briana	Jacquet	B8G	Josh	Shea
B16G	Jake	Birnel	B8MG	Alex	Koerner	G18G	Hannah	Shnurman
B12G	Nick	Birnel	B18G	Connor	Laffey	G16G	Kaitlyn	Simmons
G12G	Kaitlyn	Boyle	B18D	Sawyer	Lloyd	G18G	Samantha	Simmons
B16G	Sam	Bredenbeck	G8	Heather	Mahoney	B12G	Julian	Singh
G6M	Ashlyn	Carver	B18G	Adam	Manilla	G10	Julia	Stein
MX12D	Megan	Carver	G14G	Erika	Manilla	B16D	Kyle	Ulliman
G12D	Nikita	Chauhan	G16G	Molly	Manning	MX14D	Evan	Wargo
B8G	Vedant	Chauhan	B16D	Jacob	Matthews	G12G	Graciana	Wargo
G14G	Jordan	Cooperider	G12G	Rei	McCormick	B8G	Aidan	Weller
B10D	James	D'Ambrogia	B6MG	Joe	Merz	B18G	Zack	Wertz
G16G	Danielle	Falvey	G16D	Ema	Muslic	G18G	Krista	Yourstone

## JOIN US FOR THE 2014 JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Dates:** June 25-29

**Location:** Highlands Ranch | Denver, Colorado

**Host Club:** Highlands Ranch Community Center

**Highlights:** Great host facility, Spectacular National Parks, World-Class Museums, White Water Rafting, Top-Notch Professional Sports, Red Rocks Amphitheater, Diverse Dining, Great Weather

**Travel:** International Airport with Direct Flights and Low Fares





Jason Mannino speaking  
at 2011 Ektelon Nationals.

# STATE OF THE *International Racquetball Tour*

By Becky Wiese

Photo courtesy Restrung Magazine

**A** pro known for his unusual serve, lively banter, and extraordinary dedication, Jason Mannino retired from tour play when he accepted the IRT leadership role during the 2009-10 season. Since then, the number of IRT events has tripled, earnings continue to go up, endorsements are on the increase, and win streaks and rivalries make the game exciting for players and spectators alike.

"From a then-versus-now perspective, we've gone from 4-5 confirmed Tier 1 stops and 20-25 total events annually, to 12-

15 T1s and up to 85-100 total events expected this season," Mannino explains. The growth of the tour, not only in quantity of tournaments, but also in awareness and outreach, has risen exponentially over the past five years. "One of our main goals was to increase the number and professionalism of events; another was to increase the number of people we reach."

Now reaching almost 35,000 people through its database, interacting with 11,000 fans through social media, and updating IRT-tour.com to create a portal for all things racquetball

represent the primary ways the IRT is helping the sport become more mainstream. "Nothing is plateauing yet," says Mannino. "We still see potential for growth and fine-tuning of each method we use to reach club players and fans."

The number of players and fans is increasing, while current players are sharing their excitement with their friends. People who used to play are being re-introduced to the fun, excitement, and challenge of playing a fast-paced, aerobic, get-in-shape-and-have-fun-doing-it sport.

Mannino is quick to share credit with the team around him. "There are really three layers to the IRT's leadership. The Executive Team, made up of people who work on a day-to-day basis for the IRT, like Adam Karp, Chris Conrad, Jen Johnson, Shari Coplen, and Mark Vinciguerra."

Partners make up another layer, with valuable support from IRT Network, Pro Penn HD, and Racquetball Warehouse. The IRT Network is the key reason we are reaching into the homes of fans worldwide. ProPenn HD makes the IRT's signature, high quality balls required for the highest level of competition, and Racquetball Warehouse is our retail partner, offering a wide array of products.

Additional partners include E-Force, Ektelon, Head, ProKennex, OneShot, Tecnifibre, and Rollout Marketing – along with event directors who do a ton of work year-round, promoting the sport above and beyond what they do for their

own IRT stops. "Without these relationships, we would not have been able to grow at this pace," Mannino adds, "and we truly appreciate all their support."

Mannino's goal for the future? Simple: continued growth. "We're looking to do larger events and some big venues in New York and Miami's South Beach, in addition to some international events in South America," he says. In addition, he plans to strengthen relationships with other organizations like USA Racquetball, the Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour, and World Outdoor Racquetball.

On the tech side, new advances include streaming IRT matches in high definition and an Android app that will let fans and players manage their racquetball world with one click. Social media, buying gear, stats, and updates will all be available with the app, some as soon as the 2014-15 season.

Rarely does a player who has been a #1-ranked World Champion, two-time US Open victor, and winner of more than 20 pro titles, retire to become the president of his sport's official pro tour. But Jason Mannino thrives on doing things in uncommon ways – which makes his ultimate goal of bringing racquetball to the same awareness, branding, and professionalism of other mainstream sport leagues completely within reach.

If you would like more information about the benefits of hosting an IRT event, please contact Adam Karp, VP of Event Development at [adam@irt-tour.com](mailto:adam@irt-tour.com)



IRT Team from left: Jason Mannino, Shari Coplen, Eric Muller, Jen Johnson, Adam Karp, and Chris Conrad. Missing: Mark Vinciguerra and Mark Cotterman. Photo submitted by Jennifer Johnson



At last year's US OPEN, Paola Longoria took another win against long-time rival Rhonda Rajsich. Photo courtesy Freddy Ramirez, [Restrungmag.com](http://Restrungmag.com)

## LPRT Serving it UP

■ By Sarah Warhaftig

**T**he summer months can be quiet around the courts, but not for athletes of the LPRT gearing up for a new season. A few pros slathered on sunscreen and hit the hard pavement for some outdoor competition, and the International Racquetball Federation [IRF] World Games showcased top touring women pros from around the globe. After all that, I'm sure most pros wrapped up their summer "vacations" by spending a little extra practice time on their service games, since the LPRT has adopted the two-serve rule for the 2013-14 season.

The LPRT was well represented in Huntington Beach, California, at the World Outdoor Event. A few familiar faces, returning stars and new faces drew up a tough draw. Repeat champion Rhonda Rajsich, who has long-dominated the

outdoor scene, was upset by local Janel Tisinger in the finals. The outdoor game may begin to see some more LPRT regulars as the tour has officially adopted a point system to include national outdoor events.

Paola Longoria continued her dominance by capturing Gold at the IRF World Games in Cali, Colombia. Hometown favorite Cristina Amaya had an impressive tournament upsetting Jen Saunders from Canada and Cheryl Gudinas from the United States to advance to the finals.

The tour has seen the impressive rise of new young players that have added a quick and athletic game style to the tour. The international flair has become quite popular on tour and many of these young ladies will look to push their way to the



# schedule

top. Maria Jose Vargas, Maria Paz Munoz, Veronica Sotomayor, Sharon Jackson and Aubrey Kirch will add depth and incredible talent to the tour veterans.

With the announcement of a new scholarship program, the LPRT plans to recruit and retain the next crop of pro tour hopefuls. Scholarships will grant up to four deserving players the chance to play multiple Tier 1 events, and will underwrite a year membership to the LPRT. This is a great opportunity for rising stars ready to step up and play at the next level. Scholarship information and applications can be found on the tour's website.

The tour officially kicked off in August, in Stockton, California, where (if you haven't had time to check the recordbooks) world number one Paola Longoria last lost a match in May of 2011. She redeemed that long-ago loss and extended her streak with a straight game final win over Veronica Sotomayor.

Make sure to check out [www.lprt.com](http://www.lprt.com) for the latest news, schedule and rankings.

**Dec. 6-8, 2013**

Christmas Classic

Arlington, VA

T1

**Jan. 24-26, 2014**

Wilson Tour for Hope

Cincinnati, OH

T1

**Feb. 21-23**

Winter Classic

Overland Park, KS

T1

**March 21-23**

Great Balls of Fire

Miami, FL

T1

**Apr. 11-13**

Southern California Regionals

Reseda, CA

T1

**Apr. 25-28**

Battle at the Alamo

San Antonio, TX

T1

**TBD**

SCS Title and Escrow Pro/Am

Herndon, VA

T1

**May 21-25**

USAR National Singles

Fullerton, CA

T1

## Salas Partners with Wilson

Wilson recently announced its new partnership with Samantha Salas, currently ranked the number 3 woman pro player in the world. Samantha has set the tour on fire with her impressive performance since 2010 and has reached the #3 ranking in just two short years. Her titles include the 2004 Junior Worlds, the 2010 World Championships in doubles and the Pan American Games in 2011. She has also been a member of the Mexican National Team since 2005.

"I have been watching Samantha play for a couple of years now," stated Terri Graham Business Director Indoor Racquet Sports. "She is someone we have had our eye on, and we are very happy we were able to bring her to Wilson. She is a fighter on the court and I admire her intensity."

"I am so happy and excited to represent Wilson," said Samantha Salas. "I feel so motivated to give my best and can't wait to get on the court with my new racquet."

Samantha currently resides in Monterrey, Mexico, where she trains and is finishing her Bachelor's degree in International Business. She will be traveling to the United States for all LPRT events.





# WOR Championships

By Geoff Osberg, Tournament Co-Director

The Roundabout Entertainment WOR Championships, presented by Ektelon, once again raised the bar for outdoor championships by hosting more than 250 players from across the country and as far away as Costa Rica. The Huntington Beach event logged notable upsets all weekend long, and you're welcome to choose for yourself which was the biggest:

- Kevin Booth knocked out in the Quarters in both the CPRT and Pro Doubles divisions (his earliest ouster exit in years)
- Baby Brandon Davis / Jesus Ustarroz playing incredible ball in beating big brother Scott Davis / Clubber Craig Lane and nearly taking out Rocky Carson / Robert Hoff in the semis
- Greg Solis losing early in the Pro Singles draw
- After pulling off big comebacks to get to the Pro Singles final, Rocky Carson's first Championships loss in eight years came at the hand of Alvaro Beltran

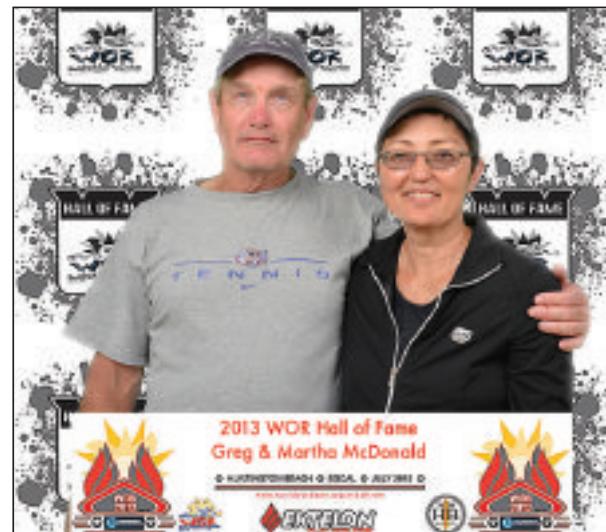
Janel Tisinger once again won the Women's Singles final by beating Rhonda Rajsich in a tiebreaker. However, this year she was denied the triple by losing in a tiebreak to Michelle Key / Keeley Franks in the Women's Doubles final. The Mixed Doubles title went to Chris McDonald / Rhonda Rajsich over Michelle Key / Daniel De La Rosa.

The greatest match of the tourney, and possibly the history of the 39 years of the WOR Championships, came in the Men's Pro Doubles final. Alvaro Beltran / Daniel De La Rosa were up big in the second game after taking the first, before Rocky Carson / Robert Hoff logged an improbable second-game comeback to force a third game. In that tiebreak, after being down 10-5, Carson/Hoff held off seven match points to pull off a dramatic 11-10 victory – and the crowd went nuts as the duo closed out a spectacular comeback!

Mark your calendars for what is sure to be another exciting Roundabout WOR Championships next year, back at Marina Park in Huntington Beach, California, in July. It will be the 40th anniversary of the WOR Championships, and it's gonna be huge!



Jake Ellenberger, top ranked UFC welterweight, spent the day watching the battles on the court instead of the octagon at the WOR Championships! Jake also spent time at the Ektelon booth, posing here with Michelle Key.





# NPRA Gives Back

By Bill Bearden

The National Police Racquetball Association had a very “charitable” year, starting with a Blue Santa Toy Drive Fundraiser last December that offered a discounted entry to players who donated to the Houston-based cause. In March, NPRA and the new Downtown YMCA hosted another benefit tournament, followed by the annual Texas Police Games in June.

Players logged some miles traveling from League City, Lubbock and Harlington to Houston, where new champions were crowned. In Men’s Open singles, Jayson Jordan avenged a

2011 loss from then-champion Rick Parker and won the gold in a thrilling tiebreaker. Phyllis Clair successfully defended her Women’s Open title by going undefeated in her round robin. Find full results at [texaspolicegames.org](http://texaspolicegames.org).

During the Games, three NPRA members were inducted into the Texas Police Athletic Federation Hall of Fame, Class 2013: Phyllis Clair (Travis County SO), Jay Heilman (Retired Euless PD) and Board member Kirk Bailey (Retired Harris County Constable #5). They joined fellow NPRA members Bill Bearden and Rich Kessler from the TPAF’s Class of 2012.



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WSMRA Board in Texas (L-R): Kendra Tutsch, Terry Rogers, Nancy Kronenfeld, Beth Sacco, Advisor Cindy Tilbury, Merijean Kelley, Jean Halahan. Not pictured: Debbie Tisinger-Moore.

## CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

By Kendra Tutsch, WSMRA Board Chair



Original group photo from 1990 | Supreme Court, Madison Wisconsin

In 1990, few of the 31 women who gathered at the Supreme Court in Madison, Wisconsin, for a small round-robin tournament could have predicted that it would grow into an annual affair and create the Women's Senior/Masters Racquetball Association. In those days a match was one game to 21 and racquets were tiny by today's standard, but the fun and friendly competition was a big hit from the start. After several more tourneys with growing attendance, some of the players organized with the goal of sustaining the tournament and promoting racquetball as a lifetime sport for women. The WSMRA has always been a volunteer organization, and the support of Wilson as our national sponsor over the past decade has enabled us to run a high-quality event while keeping costs down.

Our annual championships have been hosted by clubs all across the country, from Florida to California and all points in between. Over time, attendance has tripled, and it's fitting that we return to California to celebrate our Silver Anniversary, since the event has been played in the state five times over the years.

The tournament will be held January 17-19 in Fountain Valley at Los Caballeros Racquet Club. We're planning a very special event to celebrate, and will be rolling out the red carpet for all our guests - especially past players and former tournament directors. The club has fantastic amenities, Disneyland and the beaches are very close, and the Saturday night banquet promises to be Hollywood-worthy, so don't miss it!

Find all the necessary details on [wsmra.com](http://wsmra.com) and like us on Facebook to get regular updates. We'll see you there!



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**Wilson**  
MORE WIN.



By Bruce Adams, NMRA Secretary



The 2013 NMRA International Championship returned to the Wisconsin Athletic Clubs in West Allis and Waukesha, Wisconsin in July, where staff was just as gracious and hospitable as they were in 2004 and 2008. There were 113 players in 19 divisions from Alaska, Canada, and 25 other states – with plenty of smash mouth racquetball to go around. Even with a few dropouts and a couple of injuries, plenty of guests and locals were on hand to watch, and everyone enjoyed Kopp's Custard on Wednesday afternoon (a tradition); tons of hospitality; and just plain fun, fraternizing and fellowship.

The Brookfield Suites hosted the award banquet, where three were inducted into the NMRA Hall of Fame: Jim Elliott in the contributor category and Marquita Molina and Howard Walker in the athlete category. As a former board member, Jim has been tireless in helping with setup, teardown and scheduling of NMRA events. Marquita has been playing our events for many, many years (with a corresponding number of medals to prove it); Howard is the current NMRA President, in his second term. All three were very humble and gracious in their acceptance remarks.

David Warner was recognized at the banquet for his service on the Board of Directors, which ended March 2013. Speaking of directors, three will be coming off this March, and two will not be returning. Please consider running for the board when elections start later this fall. Talk to any board member on duties and commitments.

Next up is the NMRA Doubles-Only at The Maverick Athletic Club in Arlington, Texas (metro Dallas) from December 5 -7. We were there two years ago and had a wonderful time. The March 2014 tournament is tentatively honing in on either Kansas City, Kansas or Stockton, California. Check NationalMastersRacquetball.org to sign up for The RacquetRacket newsletter, and search Facebook for frequent updates.

Come try out one of our events – for the mature player 45+ - you will be hooked like many others have after their first event.

(TOP LEFT) Hall of Fame Inductees Jim Elliott, Marquita Molina and Howard Walker. Photo courtesy Bruce Adams.

(MIDDLE) WAC locals Jenny Franckowiak and Michael Grotz. Photo courtesy Cindy Tilbury.

(LEFT) Jean Halahan and Lars Cole, outside of the West Allis Club awaiting their match. Photo courtesy Tina Marchie.



## MRF TEAMS WITH THE NAVY WOUNDED WARRIOR SAFE HARBOR PROGRAM

■ By Steven Harper, Executive Director

Two days of having fun with wounded warriors and disabled veterans proved how the Military Racquetball Federation [MRF] is making a difference to those injured in combat. On August 1st and 2nd at the Norfolk Naval Base Waterfront Athletic Complex, MRF hosted a two-day racquetball clinic for service members of the United States Navy and Coast Guard, teaching them adaptive racquetball.

Many of the warriors who participated in the clinic were wheelchair bound because of their injuries. Some were a little apprehensive at first because they had never been exposed to racquetball, but the event was a tremendous success. Instructors for the demonstration and clinic included Chip Parmelly (co-founder of wheelchair racquetball in the late 1980's), MRF Executive Director Steven Harper, and MRF volunteers Rabbit Rogers (U.S. Air Force), Orlando Mayo (U.S. Coast Guard), and Lam Le (USMC Retired).

MRF and racquetball were part of the Navy's Recreational Adaptive Athletics Camp at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. This was a huge accomplishment as it was the first time racquetball has been included. Other sports that were part of

the camp were swimming, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair lacrosse, and wheelchair tennis. The MRF demonstration will be followed by an eight-week Racquetball Rehabilitation Clinic (RRC) taught by MRF supporter Master Chief Mayo. THE MRF's RRC program provides wounded warriors the opportunity to improve fundamentals while increasing strength, endurance, and most importantly confidence. The Navy's adaptive sports and reconditioning program provides year-round athletic opportunities for seriously wounded, ill or injured Sailors and Coast Guardsmen.

The adaptive clinic was a huge success for the sport but would not have been possible if not for the support and trust of the following MRF sponsors and volunteers: Racquetworld, E-Force, Ektelon, RacquetSkinz, One Shot, and the USOC. The volunteers who assisted in putting all this together were LT Meagan Haydel (CINC Navy Wounded Warrior – SAFE HARBOR Coordinator), Heather Campbell of the Bacik Group, Lam Le (USMC – Ret), Chip Parmelly of Dallas, Texas, Master Chief Orlando Mayo (USCG), MSgt Fred "Rabbit" Rogers (USAF) and Steven Harper (LT CMDR USN Ret).



Junior National Team coaches Jen Meyer and Kelley Beane accept a donation to the USAR Junior National Team from Denny Baysinger, Bryan Crosser, Rob Paulsen, and Don McCormick of the Iowa Racquetball Association, which served as the local organizing committee for the 2013 Junior Olympics.



## Junior National Team **ROSTER**

### 2013 US Junior National Team Qualifiers

Kelani Bailey*	Girl's 18 and Under Singles and Doubles Champion
Jordan Barth	Boy's 14 and Under Singles and Doubles Champion
Justus Benson*	Boy's 14 and Under Doubles Champion
Jake Birnel*	Boy's 16 and Under Singles Champion
Sam Bredenbeck*	Boy's 16 and Under Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up
Jordan Cooperrider*	Girl's 14 and Under Singles and Doubles Champion
Connor Laffey*	Boy's 18 and Under Singles Runner-Up
Sawyer Lloyd*	Boy's 18 and Under Doubles Champion
Adam Manilla*	Boy's 18 and Under Singles and Doubles Champion
Erika Manilla*	Girl's 14 and Under Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up
Mauro Rojas	Boy's 14 and Under Singles Runner-Up
Hollie Scott*	Girl's 16 and Under Singles Runner-Up
Kaitlyn Simmons*	Girl's 16 and Under Singles and Doubles Champion
Samantha Simmons*	Girl's 18 and Under Doubles Champion and Singles Runner-Up

### 2013 US Esprit National Team Qualifiers

Tommy Andraos*	Boy's 10 and Under Doubles Champion
Kaitlyn Boyle*	Girl's 12- Singles and Doubles Champion
Sebastian Fernandez*	Boy's 12- Singles and Doubles Champion
Briana Jacquet	Girl's 12 and Under Singles Runner-Up
Heather Mahoney	Girl's 10 and Under Doubles Champion
Rei McCormick	Girl's 10 and Under Singles Runner-Up
Akul Ramayani	Boy's 10 and Under Singles and Doubles Champion
Antonio Rojas	Boy's 12 and Under Singles Runner-Up, Boy's 10 and Under Singles Runner-Up
Julian Singh*	Boy's 12 and Under Doubles Champion
Julia Stein	Girl's 10 and Under Singles and Doubles Champion
Graciana Wargo*	Girl's 12 and Under Doubles Champion

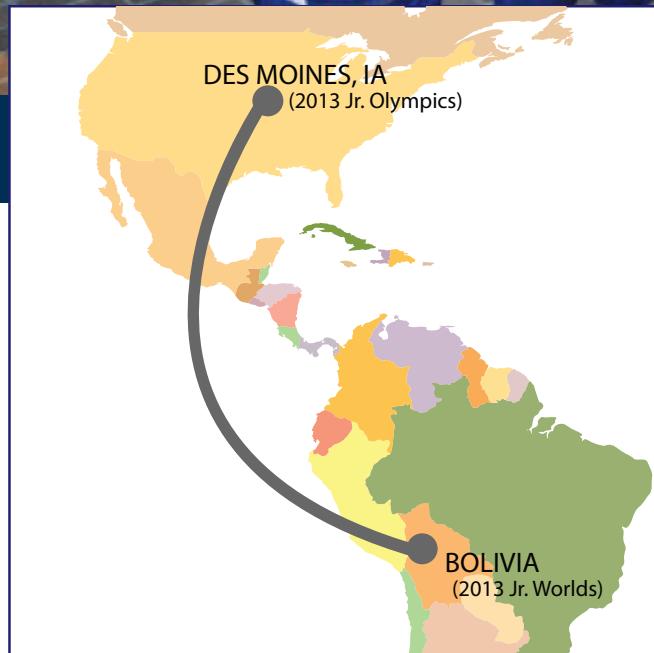
*The 2014 Junior Nationals will be hosted by the Mile High City, June 25-29*



\*indicates plan to compete in 2013 Junior World Championships



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CATCHING UP WITH US JUNIOR TEAM  
**COACH  
KELLEY BEANE**

By Cheryl Kirk  
USOC Photos by Jim Hiser  
Personal photos, courtesy Kelley Beane



**K**elley Beane has worn a lot of hats in racquetball, as a sponsored player, coach, instructor, New Hampshire State President for 15 years, Team Leader for the US National Team, and currently Head Coach of the US Junior Team since 2003. She is a most accomplished individual in her own right, but it's like pulling teeth to get her to talk about herself. She'd rather talk about her assistant coaches and her players.

But, first things first...

Coach Kelley hails from Manchester, NH, where she is a trainer and fitness director at Elite Personal Training & Fitness owned by Tim Whitcomb. She and Brian Fisher have been together for 27 years. They are parents to canines Augie, 6, and Gertie, 6 mos. and also Miss America the cat, 11. Interests? "An old Harley Davidson motorcycle I ride around. I had a pretty bad accident one time, and it helped define how I approached the future...living in the now."

Beane's early September birthday marked (mumble) years, and she celebrates each year with a tradition – climbing up to the Old Man in the Mountain and sitting above the clouds, reflecting on life, past, present and future. She has played racquetball for nearly 30 years, winning numerous singles and doubles age titles at Nationals and the US Open. "My favorite doubles partner is Joanne Pomodoro...we've been playing together 20+ years."

In addition to achievements on the court, Kelley has won USAR's Joe Sobek Contributor Award twice, in 2001 and 2007. "Joe Sobek was from Connecticut, and I got to meet him years ago. It was very special to me. He came to one of our tournaments in the '80's and said he couldn't believe how the game had changed over the years. I have a signed letter from him that I framed." She has also been named USOC USA Coach of the Year three times, in 2000, 2002, and 2012. "Those awards are right there on the wall next to my picture with Toby Keith!"

**Coach Kelley, what influenced you to start playing?** It's a pretty funny story. Racquetball was really popular in the early '80's. I lived in the country, kind of farm stuff. Going into the city to join a health club, we weren't that kind of people. My mom played scratch tickets, and she won \$5,000. She told each of her four kids (I was 20 at the time) that we could each have one thing we wanted. I asked for a health club membership in Manchester. I think my sister picked a dryer... Anyway, at the health club, Mary Dee was the club pro and a world champion in 1984. She took me under her

wing when I didn't even really know how to play, and she used to give me her old racquets. It was so nice of her. She would beat me 21-0 consistently. I got to meet players like Marty Hogan and Caryn McKinney because they came to play with Mary. If my mom hadn't won that scratch ticket, it would have changed the course of my life. When we cleaned out their house, I found the receipt for the scratch ticket winnings. I'm going to frame that, too!

**What does being Coach of the US Junior Team mean to you?** The kids give me more than I could ever give them. It keeps me in the game, keeps me walking in a straight line, leading by example. It keeps me involved when I might have walked away from the sport years ago. They make me stay healthy...I walk the same line I ask them to walk. I don't have kids, they're my family, we talk on the phone all year, and it means the world to me. To watch what they become, and when they call me years later and remember the lessons, it's very rewarding.

**Thoughts on your coaching staff?** All of the coaches are better than I am - they're the best in the business. I like giving Junior Team kids a chance to come back and coach. I always try to bring in one each year and begin developing them. I got the opportunity from Eric Muller, and I like to pay it forward and create opportunities for the Junior kids as they get older.

We joke that every coach has their role. Mine is the bad guy...Cheryl Gudinas picks up the pieces after I've come through like a hurricane. Shane Wood is the "sprinter" (just ask Ben Croft). Jen Meyer prepares the little kids, she's so kind and doesn't scare them -- she's preparing them for the older kids' team. The sacrifices are many: time out of your life for no pay, sometimes getting sick on the road. These coaches are the best at what they do.

It's important to get the right fit, the right mix, on the coaching staff as it continually evolves. A mix of older and younger...of gender...it's so much more than racquetball. It's about meeting the needs of the athletes. There's a lot more to it than short serves and pass shots. It's psychology, strategy, influencing them to become good sports and, better yet, great people. After all, that's what matters most.

**Any funny stories and/or memories in these years you've been coaching the US Junior Team?** With our coaching staff, every meal, every flight, every experience is something to laugh about. There are times when the kids have knocked on our door and asked us to keep it down because we're laughing

"We joke that every coach has their role.

***Mine is the bad guy.***

Being a member of the USA Junior Team for a number of years and working under Coach Kelley Beane was a remarkable experience that has shaped the person I am today. Much of what she and the Team taught me are traits that I continue to live by and fulfill in my everyday life. Not only is Kelley an incredible motivator, coach, and mentor, she's a great friend. She's played a significant role in my development as an athlete and a person.

**- KARA MILLER (MAZUR)**

Coach Kelley is by far one of the best coaches I've ever had throughout my racquetball career. She has an overwhelming amount of love for the sport, but more importantly love for the students she's coaching. She knows her stuff and knows exactly how to convey it to each student individually. She creates a fun environment while also being firm and effective as a coach. My best memories of being on the Junior Team were under her reign as a coach. She is a fantastic woman and she loves all her little ducks!

**- JANEL TISINGER**

My years spent on the Junior National Team were some of the best years of my life, and for that I thank Coach Kelley! She is the most selfless person I know, and would do anything for any player or coach on the team. Even though my years on the team and playing for Coach Kelley are gone, those are memories that I will never forget! At Worlds, wearing USA on my back, looking right at her in the glass, fist pumping and yelling to keep me motivated ... these are the reasons why I am a World Champion, and I couldn't have done it without Coach Kelley by my side.

**- SHANNON INGLESBY**

Kelley is one of the most influential people I have known. Her support is unconditional for every one that has been on the Junior Team. She is not only an extraordinary coach but one of the most caring and loving people one could ever meet. She taught me what a team was all about and how to work hard not only for yourself but everyone else wearing USA on their back. I met a lifelong friend in Kelley, and I can say I am a much better person because of her. I appreciate everything she has done for me and I miss those days as Junior USA team member more than anyone can ever imagine.

**- TAYLOR KNOTH**

Coach Kelley Beane is such a great and genuine person. She is willing to help others that need help and shows love because she has a big heart. We really connected my first year on the team and have had a strong bond ever since. My greatest moments being on the team have involved her watching me win a gold medal in Cochabamba and giving me a huge hug after winning a gold medal my final year as a junior.

**- MARKIE ROJAS**

so much. We use secret codes, passwords...it's all in the camaraderie that we have as a coaching team. If you think Gudinas is coaching when she's talking with me, she's really talking about people's outfits.

**What factors could keep the US Junior Team from future domination on the world stage?** Financial factors, absolutely, but probably more so that the kids are getting tugged in so many directions, into other sports where coaching staffs want them exclusively. Racquetball often becomes secondary. Keeping racquetball on the forefront is difficult. We need to be trying to promote racquetball as cross training to help keep kids in it.

**What has been your most memorable moment in racquetball?**

Obviously the world team titles are memorable [three as Junior Head Coach], but when a kid wins his or her individual world title, just watching them win that, it's so emotional, it's to die for. I remember every single one of them. When you see what they have gone through in training, doing everything you ask them to do, there's nothing like it. I'm so happy for them!



**With Cheryl Gudinas in Juarez**



**With fans in Cochabamba**



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## CONTINUING THE *Making of a Champion*

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

**O**key, let's continue "Making You a Champion" using the core principles of "Building Your Racquetball Dream House" as you build your championship racquetball game one assessment at a time. This will allow you to always complete the "Racquetball Success Triangle" we explained in the Winter 2010 issue of Racquetball magazine.

In the last issue, Summer 2013, I recommended taking the summer months to look at the goals you had previously set for yourself then re-evaluating your game and making some adjustments in those goals as necessary.

Too often players take the entire summer off from racquetball and working out but expect to come back as strong as before. This couldn't be further from reality. It is extremely important to take 3-4 weeks off after the season to recover and heal the body and mind, but then you must come back and train, both on and off the court, always keeping in mind the goals you set for yourself.

Hopefully over the summer you took the time to analyze and set goals for yourself, categorized into the six time periods I covered in detail in the Summer 2013 issue:

1. *Immediate goals (0 to 90 days)*
2. *Short-range goals (3 to 6 months)*
3. *Short-term goals (6 months to 1 year)*
4. *Long-range goals (1 to 3 years)*
5. *Long-term goals (3 to 6 years)*
6. *Ultimate long-term goals (5+ years)*

With these detailed goals laid out, I now recommend that you take it one step further and make your own "goal setting log" which will help you keep track of how you are doing in each area. Below are the suggested areas, and by grading each area

from "A" (meaning great) to "F", (meaning you need to really work on this aspect), you will be able to make adjustments in particular areas, where necessary, based on what you discover:

1. *Healthy diet, hydration, and sleep*
2. *Visualization, guided imagery, affirmations, nostril breathing*
3. *Aerobic and anaerobic conditioning*
4. *Strength, flexibility, speed, balance, agility and coordination*
5. *Skills, strategies, tactics, and technique*
6. *Mental skills training (focus, concentration, and pre-game psyche plan)*
7. *Motivation, attitude, humor*
8. *Stress and recovery cycles*
9. *Playing with passion*
10. *Competitive toughness*

Keeping a weekly "goal-setting log" will assist you in developing consistency as you work to achieve an "A" (or as close to an "A" as possible) in each one of these areas. These results will allow you to optimize your racquetball potential and help you reach your championship level game...your ultimate goal!

One through ten in the goal-setting log covers all three sides of the Racquetball Success Triangle:

- *Left-Side-Conditioning & Nutritional Skills (1, 3, 4, and 8)*
- *Right Side-Mental Skills (2, 6, 7, 9, and 10)*
- *Base-Physical Skills-Techniques and Strategies/Tactics (5)*



Rocky, Paola, Jason and the rest of my Championship Team all keep a goal-setting log, because they know this is what separates the good players from the champions.

For more details on "Goal Setting," see my book, *Championship Racquetball*, Chapter 9.

I hope to see you at one of my camps for live personal instruction. If you can't make a camp at this time, buy my video, *Building Your Racquetball Dream House*, my book, *Championship Racquetball*, or my app. For details go to [www.FranDavisRacquetball.com](http://www.FranDavisRacquetball.com).

**Fran Davis** coaches Paola Longoria (#1 LPRT), Rocky Carson (#2 IRT), Taylor Knoth (#1 Junior National and World Champion), and Sharon Jackson (#1 National Intercollegiate Champion). She is a former US Team National Coach, 2004 USA Racquetball Hall of Fame inductee, 2009 Woman of the Year, and a USAR-IP Master Professional Instructor.

You'll see USAR-Instructor Program Master Professional Fran Davis on the sidelines of National Championships nationwide, coaching top junior players and touring professionals. Photo: courtesy Freddy Ramirez, [Restrungmag.com](http://Restrungmag.com).

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## Camp Schedule:

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October 18-20	Nashua, NH
November 1-3	Chicago, IL
December 6-8	Las Vegas, NV
January 17-19	Florida
Jan. 31-Feb. 2	Seattle, WA
February 7-9	TBD
Feb. 28-March 2	TBD
April 4-6	Findlay, OH

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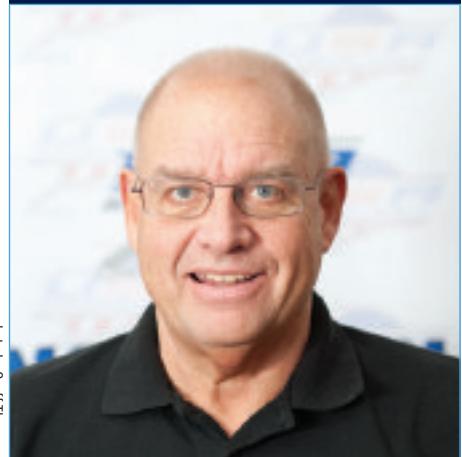
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# IS IT LEGAL TO Switch Hands?

■ by Otto Dietrich, USA Racquetball National Rules Commissioner

photo by Geoff Thomsen



*“... the ongoing rally must be played out.”*

**H**ere are some recent questions that have come across my desk...

**Bryan asked:** Can a player just drop the ball off of his racquet to begin the serve?

**Otto answered:** Unless the player has some problem that precludes using the hand, the answer is no. If he must, he should advise the referee and his opponent of his need to do this and how they will know which drop of the ball off of his racquet is the one that will be immediately followed by his serving stroke. It can't be used for deception!

**David asked:** When my opponent is serving and trying to hit the back corner so that it is more difficult for me to return the serve, can I go ahead and whack it before it bounces?

**Otto answered:** You sure can! As long as you follow all the other rules regarding the return of serve (Rule 3.11), you can return the ball “on the fly,” provided that the ball hasn’t yet reached the back wall. When it does, it immediately becomes long and no longer playable.

**Chris asked:** When self-officiating a match, does the rule still apply that the score must be called out before service or is that only applicable when there is a referee?

**Otto answered:** When the server calls out the score or “second serve,” the receiver knows that the serve is about to happen. This is also the opportunity for the players to immediately clarify/agree on how the last rally was scored before the next serve is made. For example, one player might assume the prior rally ended on a mere replay hinder, but the other might think that it wasn’t, i.e. a point was scored. Calling out the score

offers the opportunity to get it right before play proceeds. By the way, that concept (not a true “rule”) is stated as Policy D.1 in the Self-Officiating Section at the back of the Official Rules of Racquetball found at [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com).

**Ricardo asked:** When a player breaks a string during a rally, I assume the rally must be played out and play should not be stopped. Is this correct?

**Otto answered:** That’s right – the ongoing rally must be played out. The racquet cannot be replaced until all play in that rally has stopped. Also, the equipment timeouts discussed in the Rulebook cannot be called to replace equipment until you have used your three regular timeouts.

**Ken asked:** Can you tell me if it is legal to switch a racquet from one hand to another while playing a match?

**Otto answered:** A wrist cord at the bottom of the racquet’s handle is mandatory and must remain securely attached to one wrist basically from the time the server starts his serve until the rally is over. However, you can change hands between rallies. Also, you can put both hands on the racquet, but there is a limit on the length of the wrist cord as stated in the rulebook (Rule 2.4(d)). Using both hands usually restricts one’s stroke, which is why few do it.

**Dion asked:** What is the likelihood of a screen hinder occurring on a backhand Z-serve where the server serves from the middle of the service zone and the ball passes in front of the server?

**Otto answered:** It all depends. First, please read Rule 3.9(i) in the rulebook. That inside Z-serve will obviously pass close

to the server and possibly screen the ball a bit. But, such a serve usually is only playable much closer to the service box than a receiver normally stands. So if the serve fools the receiver who can't react fast enough to play the ball very well, then it is not a screen because it was not caused by its closeness passing the server but rather by the surprise nature of the serve itself and its rebound. Probably the foremost user of this serve is Jimmy Lowe from Hawaii who is a multiple National Champion and recipient of Age Group Player of the Year awards. His opponents will tell you that nobody does that inside Z-serve better (or more often)!

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

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

### Always “Play by the Rules”

and, if you don't have a copy of them, I encourage you to go online to review them at: [USARacquetball.com](http://USARacquetball.com).

## NOW IN EFFECT

1. USA Racquetball events throughout the nation, including Open divisions, will play the two-serve game except for the U.S. National Team Qualifying divisions at National Singles and National Doubles.
2. Electronic audio devices cannot be used during play unless they are to amplify the player's hearing ability.
3. Players must wear shoes and cannot play barefoot or only in socks.
4. Unintentional carries are permitted and are no longer called.

Be sure to review the above rules in their entirety in the revised edition of the Official Rulebook, available online.

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At 145 lbs./in, the dynamic stiffness of Zyex is the closest to gut of any synthetic string material. It has even been called the “space age nylon.” This means it absorbs and returns impact force better than nylon. We call this “Soft Power” with our UltraKill® 17 and 18 gauge strings; “Ultra Power” with heavy-gauge UltraKill 16. It controls the ball better than nylon, especially in thinner gauge strings, and holds tension much better than nylon, which means it stays playable in your racquet longer.

## String Power: COMPARING ZYEX® AND NYLON

One of the difficulties in talking about string is that we have no common frame of reference. When someone says it's 25°F outside, you know you should probably wear a coat. Conversely, if someone says they “fried” themselves at the beach, or “overindulged” at dinner, you also have a fairly accurate idea of what they mean. But when we talk about racquet string, we not only have no convenient numerical standards, like temperature, but even qualitative descriptors like “durability” and “playability” mean different things to different people.

This lack of common reference can be especially difficult when we're not just talking about a specific string, but a string material—like Zyex®, which has gotten a lot of attention lately—or even a method of constructing string that can be applied to a whole range of string products.

One way to get around this difficulty is to compare a new string or material with another string or material whose characteristics are better known. Crawford Lindsey, Rob Cross, and company at USRSA (RacquetTECH.com) have been doing some very interesting studies to measure string performance which, one day, may well result in a standardized rating scheme for all strings. Their work is highly technical, but some of their comparison data may help us shed light on the differences between nylon and Zyex in generating power.

To do so, it will be helpful to compare these materials to natural gut. While never used in racquetball to my knowledge, gut has long been the “gold standard” in tennis, as it has a number of properties that make it ideal for racquet strings. Made from the intestines of cows (not cats!), its performance has been unmatched since it was first introduced in the nineteenth century. What makes gut a superstar is its ability to stretch on impact and then rebound quickly without deformation or loss of tension.

### This means several things:

- 1) The string absorbs the force of impact, not the racquet or the player's arm. In other words, gut plays “soft”;
- 2) It returns that force to the ball very quickly and efficiently, providing more power;
- 3) Because it stretches, it allows the ball more dwell time on the strings. This lets players “pocket” the ball and enhances control;
- 4) Gut maintains tension over the life of the string, enhancing its value. Gut is also quite durable when struck on the sweet spot, but not so much on off-hits, making it better for better players. On the downside, gut is very expensive and, without protective coatings, tends to sag in high humidity.

The key to gut-like playability is dynamic stiffness, which can also be likened to elasticity. Zyex inventor Bruce McIntosh calls dynamic stiffness “the ability of a material to resist stiffening up as it is rapidly stretched and released—to become ‘boardy.’” It's measured in pounds per inch, and in laymen's terms, is a measure of how much a string stretches when it strikes the ball. The more stretch, the more power it returns to the ball and the less impact it has on your arm and elbow. The less it stretches, the more energy is lost in flattening the ball and the less total power is available for rebound. As in golf, the lower the dynamic stiffness ‘score’, the better. In the USRSA studies gut had a dynamic stiffness of 108 lb./in.

Nylon has been the most gut-like alternative to gut for many years, and has long been the gold standard for racquetball. Most current nylon strings are multifilaments: many thin strands of nylon, bundled in a protective jacket. Nylon strings are very inexpensive compared to other synthetics; are very responsive; not sensitive to moisture (or other chemicals, for that matter); and provide good abrasion resistance. In the USRSA studies, the dynamic stiffness ratings for several nylon string brands were approximately 190 lb./in. This is quite respectably low, especially when compared with aramid strings that top the stiffness scale at over 500 lb./in. Nylon's main drawback is that it loses tension more quickly than other string materials. This means it doesn't last as long in your racquet, so while it's less expensive, you have to buy more of it.

By comparison, the dynamic stiffness of Zyex came in at 145 lb./in, the closest to gut of any synthetic string material. It has even been called the “space age nylon.” (In fact, Zyex is very much a space age material. [See our earlier column, “What in the World is Zyex, Anyway?”] This means it absorbs and returns impact force better than nylon. We call this “Soft Power” with our UltraKill® 17 and 18 gauge strings; “Ultra Power” with heavy-gauge UltraKill 16. Zyex controls the ball better than nylon, especially in thinner gauge strings, and holds tension much better than nylon, which means it stays playable in your racquet longer. Zyex is impervious to moisture and offers excellent abrasion resistance to enhance durability. And, it's very modestly priced.

# Penn

## The BEST just got BETTER!



For more than 40 years PENN has been on the cutting edge of ball technology for the sport of racquetball. We have never lost sight of the fact that a better ball means more enjoyment of the game for our customers. Today we are pleased to announce another revolutionary breakthrough with the re-launch of all our racquetball ball products. PENN engineers have discovered new and improved rubber compounds and state of the art manufacturing processes that deliver unparalleled performance for every level of play. Lighter, crisper, ultra consistent, and with unprecedented durability, PENN's new line of racquetballs will have you hitting thunderous splats and blistering passing shots with ease. **PENN—The BEST just got BETTER!**

### 40 Years of Innovation



1970's *Revolutionary Penn Ultra Blue launched. Becomes industry standard & world's #1 selling ball.*

1980's *Penn Ultra Blue becomes Official Ball of AARA (now USA Racquetball)*

1990's *Penn becomes Official Ball of IRT. New premium Pro Penn ball introduced.*

2000 *Penn again revolutionizes the sport with the introduction of the Pro Penn HD.*



*“...the next, most natural, market for us to enter was racquetball.”*

With over a century of expertise, Dunlop is one of the world's best known sports brands. So when it recently decided to get into the racquetball market, it partnered with one of the world's best known players – 5-Time World Champion Sudsy Monchik. Sudsy is famous for his ability to disrupt his opponent's rhythm and wreak havoc on the court, so the new Dunlop product line was designed to help players of all levels do the same – be disruptive. Monchik will lead in the development of the global product line, in addition to handling promotions and sponsorships, plus will actively endorse the brand by using Dunlop racquets, balls and accessories whenever he's on court.

With a racquet line focused on reducing aerodynamic drag and a ball that is 40% more visible than the leading competitor, Dunlop expects to turn the racquetball market upside down. Whether you're looking for maximum power from your racquet through revolutionary design and technology, a better grip from your glove, or a brighter racquetball that lets you see it better and hit it harder, check out the Dunlop racquetball lineup to find the products that will help you be disruptive on court!

“With our strength in tennis, dominance in squash, and the emergence of the Carlton brand in badminton, the next, most natural, market for us to enter was racquetball,” commented Kai Nitsche, V.P. and General Manager of Dunlop Sports Group Americas. “Over the next few months we'll be delivering premium racquets, balls, and a full range of accessories. We have focused our development on innovative product that we feel the sport has lacked, and we've hired the most qualified person in racquetball to make this happen, Sudsy Monchik.”

[www.dunlopsports.com](http://www.dunlopsports.com)

# Wilson.

Chicago-based Wilson Sporting Goods Co., a division of Amer Sports, has been at the heart of sports history for almost a century through its influence and involvement in shaping the games of tennis, golf, baseball, football – and racquetball. Originating breakthrough performance technologies and backed by generations of athletes, Wilson employs over 1,600 people globally and serves customers in over 100 countries.

In addition to new equipment releases this season, Wilson recently announced the signing of LPRT pro Samantha Salas [see pg.11], plus an extension of its partnership with Jansen Allen. Placing great emphasis on working with the top athletes in the world, Wilson initiated the ongoing partnership with Jansen in 2011. Over the past two years of being part of the WTEAM program, Jansen won the 2013 National Doubles and 2012 National Intercollegiate Championships.

"Jansen is a class act both on and off the court," stated Terri Graham, Indoor Business Director. "He's a true gentleman and represents Wilson in the most positive way in all situations. We're very excited to have him continuing his playing days with Wilson."

"I am extremely pleased to continue my racquetball career with Wilson on the pro tour full time," stated Jansen Allen. "I'm happy to have their confidence and full support. They have amazing products, and I look forward to a successful future with Wilson."

[www.wilson.com/racquetball/](http://www.wilson.com/racquetball/)



*"Jansen is a class act both on and off the court. He's a true gentleman and represents Wilson in the most positive way in all situations."*



Now based in Omaha, Nebraska, Ektelon® is a division of Active Brands Company. Ektelon® was the first brand in racquetball, since 1964, and has been a driving force in the innovation of the game. From humble beginnings to world-class competition, the company has crafted equipment that consistently positions its athletes at the top of the game.

Ektelon's heritage includes some of the top players in the sport's history, including racquetball legends who helped shape the sport - like Charlie Brumfield, Dr. Bud Muehleisen and Bill Schmidtke - and more recently, former No. 1 players Mike Yellen, Dave Peck, Ruben Gonzalez, Lynn Adams and Rhonda Rajsich.

Today, Ektelon is recognized as an industry leader, by developing and introducing significant technology to the sport. Over four decades, it has revolutionized racquet sizes and shapes to enhance power and control, developed strings and stringing systems that have changed the sport by broadening its appeal to every level of player, while also designing superior quality accessories like grips, balls, bags and footwear.

With championship pedigree, the Ektelon flame represents racquetball with one of the most recognizable brands on the market.

The latest EXO3 Energy Bridge™ frame technology is detailed online, and includes an exo skeletal structure that suspends the string bed from the frame, for a virtual head size that is 10% larger, while expanding the sweet spot up to 51%, and reducing frame vibration by up to 63%. The Energy Channel™ is a sculpted groove within the frame that improves stability by moving mass to the outer edges, for better control and specialized inserts allow players to customize the weight and balance of the frame.

[Ektelon.com](http://Ektelon.com)

# HEAD®

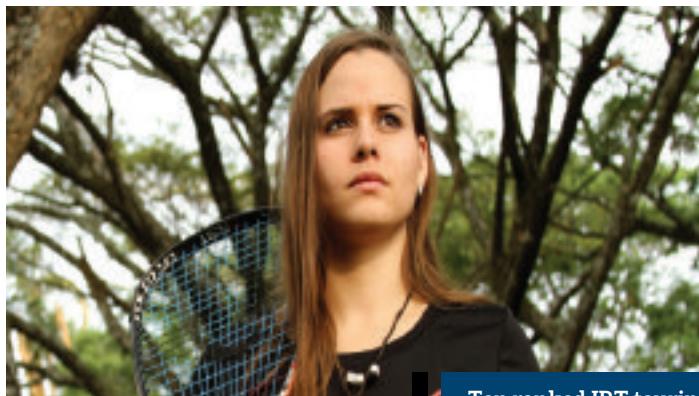
As a leading racquet innovator for nearly 40 years, HEAD has been on the cutting edge of powerful new designs and technology which have consistently set performance standards in the industry. As a full line manufacturer, it has also brought superior performance and style to accessories, including footwear, gloves, eyeguards, grips, string, bags, and vibration dampeners.

With the acquisition of the dominant Penn brand of tennis balls and racquetballs in 1999, the company changed its name to HEAD Penn Racquet Sports and claimed a major market share position in every product segment of the sport. The Penn brand remains the choice of top players and is the best-selling ball in the sport – with marquee designations as the Official Ball of the IRT, USA Racquetball, the IRF, and the US OPEN Racquetball Championships.

Since HEAD's debut in racquetball, elite professional players have used HEAD's products to reach the very top of the rankings. Superstars like Doug Cohen, Fran Davis, Mike Ray, Jack Newman, Cliff Swain, Christie VanHees and Sudsy Monchik all used HEAD at the peak of their careers ... and this rich heritage continues on with Rocky Carson and Paola Longoria leading a large team of today's elite athletes.

For this season, HEAD Penn has again pushed the power and performance standard to a new level with the revolutionary Zeus 165 and Ares 175 racquets, featuring the company's patented Innegra material. In addition, a completely redesigned glove line, a new highly functional and fashionable Zeus Combi bag, and the Speed Pro Lite II Indoor Court shoe round out new product offerings for this year. For more information visit [www.head.com](http://www.head.com).





A relative newcomer to the industry, Gearbox Racquetball is fueled by the burning desire to create superior, technology-based racquets and accessories – as well as help rebuild and change the sport by giving back, promoting its virtues and reaching out to players at all levels.

Gearbox was founded in San Diego by Rafael Filippini, a touring pro with a background in design and composites and over 20 years in the industry. During that time, he honed his skills, created revolutionary patents, and dreamed about creating a new racquetball brand that would be different from the status quo. When the time came for him to branch out on his own, he was armed with new technologies and marketing ideas set to redefine the industry. The GB250 was his original high-end foray into the equipment market, and its success and acceptance paved the way for an expanded line of high quality racquetball products.

But this was just the beginning. Rafael saw that players-at-large were generally isolated and disconnected from the heart of the sport, and that promotion was especially lacking at the court level. Enter the Gearbox Bus. Taking a grass-roots approach, the company supports small clubs, rec centers and colleges, by embracing players who now get the opportunity to see the serious efforts being made to usher the sport back to its glory days in a cool and fresh way. They can experience first-hand how quality products can improve their games and how the racquetball lifestyle can become part of them for the rest of their lives.

So, in a short time, Gearbox has become the brand synonymous with the racquetball lifestyle. With its advanced line of racquets, edgy apparel and high quality accessories, the future is limitless. Gearbox's effort to reinvigorate the sport is founded in Rafael's heartfelt belief that racquetball is the best sport in the world.

Top ranked IRT touring pros Christina Amaya and Alvaro Beltran. Photo courtesy Gearboxrb.com



## HARROW

**H**arrow Sports was founded in May of 2000 to provide innovative and quality sporting goods equipment, and has become a leading marketer, manufacturer, and distributor for Field Hockey, Lacrosse, Ice Hockey, and Racquet Sports. The company offers a comprehensive selection of customizable team apparel, bags, and footwear – as well as personalized service, custom craftsmanship, and a design team that includes 4x US OPEN CPRT champion Woody Clouse.

Harrow creates its high-quality hybrid racquets by applying basic principles and insightful common sense, designing them to enhance the feel and control of the frame while increasing the power and decreasing vibration. No gimmicks, no “new age technology” and no smoke and mirrors, just sound reasoning.

On the technical side, minimizing the width of the frame increases stability during impact; a larger sweet spot results from the frame having less distance outside of the center point, which also helps maintain integrity through the impact zone. The triangular shape, an internal contour frame and integrated, single-unit handle/frame construction combines for great control, power and durability. Adding more mains and crosses tightened the stringbed pattern to give greater control; the longer throat increases leverage and power; and the re-designed grip locks into a player’s hand for added feel and stability.

Harrow uses only one manufacturer for production, assuring consistency and quality control, and their “in house” philosophy enables them to customize frames to the specifics of any player. Without advertising or marketing, they’ve grown in the market through grassroots word of mouth and performance – staying away from market trends and adhering to the physics of how a racquetball racquet should respond.

***Harrow’s latest trio of frames include the Connect, Sovereign, and the Spiritus to accommodate every preference for a light, evenly balanced or head heavy frame.***



***Editor’s Note:*** With thanks to all the industry players who answered Racquetball Magazine’s call for information to include here, we understand that some were unable to respond to our quick turnaround on this feature segment. For this industry update, companies were positioned in the order of that response.

**ASHAWAY**

Ashaway Racket Strings has introduced a new and improved version of its popular UltraKill® 16 string for racquetball. Effecting what Ashaway describes as a “revolution in racquetball string technology,” the new UltraKill 16 utilizes a combination of Zyex® filaments and a new Power Filament Technology™ (PFT™) design. The result is a string that maximizes durability, provides superior power, and maintains tension better than kindred strings.

**E-FORCE**

Originally founded by namesake World Champion Egan Inoue out of Hawaii, and later sold to Ron Grimes, E-Force is now a California-based company with an innovative research and development unit responsible for many of today's new technologies. Grimes had been a key figure in the early development of Ektelon and his lifetime of experience and specialty engineering in the industry is what makes the company so successful among a very loyal following. Find out more online at [Eforce.com](http://Eforce.com).

**PROKENNEX**

Racquetball Warehouse reports that: "The brainiacs at ProKennex have done it again. With the new line of racquets comes a brand new technology from their labs. The Force Flow Technology is located in the throat of the frame and will be instantly noticed on court. Designed to redirect escaping energy from the string bed, FFT forces the flow of that energy back into the strings of the racquet, giving you increased power as well as increased stiffness. #1 ranked pro player Kane Waselenchuk liked the new frames so much he switched mid-season to close out his second undefeated season with the KM F175." [ProKennex-Racquetball.com](http://ProKennex-Racquetball.com)

**FROM THE President** *(continued from page 4)*

closely mirror my competitive play, so I'll also use whatever ball is designated for my next event and try to play on a similar wall surface. Every ball and surface feels and plays differently (even within your favorite maker's product line), and I view it as an integral part of tournament preparation. If you're serious about investing in your game, I recommend finding discounts, then buying balls in bulk!

Your closest connection to your racquet is your glove and/or grip, so it's critical that they both be in good condition too. I retire gloves fairly early but feel I get extended life out of them by changing my grip more frequently. I offered a grip to a player whose own was well past its prime, and it actually took him a while to adjust to the new, stickier feel. Grips are very inexpensive and simple to replace – so don't find out that you waited too long to replace yours ... by losing hold of your racquet at match point!

Shoes are another critical element for ensuring optimum performance and also play a significant role in avoiding injuries. I usually swap my shoes out earlier than their

appearance warrants (taking to heart numerous articles on the subject). On a personal note, I recently rolled an ankle twice in a month. As a former competitive soccer player, I'm very familiar with the appropriate course of treatment for that injury, but my recovery was taking much longer than normal, so I wondered if my shoes were breaking down since I'd been playing more. After changing out my shoes, my recovery improved dramatically. I'm now convinced that, although my shoes looked fine, they weren't providing the necessary support and cushioning. If you play a lot, replace your footwear regularly. In addition to the increased traction and support, you can avoid impact injuries and perhaps improve your recovery time.

There is much more to be said about equipment, apparel, accessories, nutrition, and hydration products – but these are some of the more important topics, in my mind. I'm sure the debate on equipment will continue, since everyone I know wants to optimize their performance. Find out what works best for you - then play hard and have fun!



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EVERY KILL SHOT

EVERY WINNER

EVERY SEASON STARTS AT



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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2013 Huntsman World Senior Games	Oct. 9-12	St. George	UT	Sports Village
International Comes to New Mexico	Oct. 10-13	Albuquerque	NM	Midtown Sports And Wellness
Killer Open	Oct. 10-13	Centennial	CO	Goodson Recreation Center
4th Annual Harry Tractman Invitational	Oct. 11-13	Chalfont	PA	Philadelphia Sports Club at Highpoint
2013 Garnet and Gold Classic	Oct. 11-13	Tallahassee	FL	FSU Leach Center
2013 WOR Georgia Outdoor One Wall	Oct. 12	Savannah	GA	Lake Mayer Community Park
Cousin Vinnies Shootout	Oct. 12	Friday Harbor	WA	San Juan Fitness Club
Ghostly Doubles	Oct. 12-13	San Antonio	TX	Gold's Gym HCV
West Michigan Open Pro Am Championships	Oct. 12-13	Grand Rapids	MI	Michigan Athletic Club
2013 Fall Frenzy	Oct. 12-13	Brentwood	TN	Maryland Farms YMCA
Timberhill Open	Oct. 17-20	Corvallis	OR	Timberhill
Bob Schwab Memorial Tournament	Oct. 18-19	Peoria	IL	Landmark Racquet & Health Club
2013 Fran Davis Racquetball Camp Nashua, NH	Oct. 18-19	Nashua	NH	Nashua Athletic Club
2013 Texas State Doubles Championships	Oct. 18-19	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club
Cross Court Open	Oct. 18-19	Woodland	CA	Cross Court Athletic Club
VA 2013 - Ghostly Gateway	Oct. 18-19	Arlington	VA	Crystal Gateway Sport & Health Club
DARA Memorial	Oct. 19	Wilmington	DE	Central YMCA
Halloween Classic	Oct. 19-20	Arlington Hgts	IL	Forest View Racquet Club
Men of October	Oct. 24-26	Sun City West	AZ	Sun City West Racquetball
2013 Izzi Racquetball Open - IRT Tier 3	Oct. 25-27	Gillette	WY	Campbell County Rec Center
South Carolina State Doubles	Oct. 25-27	Greenville	SC	Greenville Sports Club
Spartan Splat	Oct. 26-27	East Lansing	MI	Michigan Athletic Club
2013 Fran Davis Racquetball Camp	Nov. 1-3	Chicago	IL	TBA
The 2013 ORA State Doubles Championships	Nov. 1-3	Huber Heights	OH	The Heights Racquetball & Fitness Club
Kitsap Splat	Nov. 1-3	Bremerton	WA	Kitsap Tennis & Athletic Center
Arizona State Doubles Championships	Nov. 1-3	Tempe	AZ	ASU Student Recreational Center
2013 WOR Krowning Moment Championships	Nov. 2-3	Miami	FL	Tropical Park
Red Swain Shootout	Nov. 7-10	Davison	MI	Davison Athletic Club
12th Annual Pinchshot.com St. Louis Open - IRT	Nov. 8-10	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Sports-CONCORD
Texas State Seniors	Nov. 8-10	Houston	TX	Sweetwater CC
One Wall Ball	Nov. 9	Savannah	GA	Lake Mayer Community Park
23rd Turkey Shootout and IRT Tier 1 Pro/Am	Nov. 14-17	Garden City	KS	Garden City Family YMCA
2013 Maverick Racquetball Turkey Shootout	Nov. 16-17	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club
Phoenix Motor Company Holiday Tournament	Nov. 21-24	Phoenix	AZ	Village Racquet & Health Club, Camelback
Turkey Shoot Open/Tier 5 IRT Event	Nov. 21-24	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness
KS State Doubles Championships	Nov. 22-23	Topeka	KS	Downtown Topeka YMCA
2013 Sarasota Fall Tournament	Nov. 22-24	Sarasota	FL	Sarasota Bath & Racquet Club
2013 VA - 22nd Annual Turkey Shootout	Nov. 22-24	Newport News	VA	Riverside Wellness and Fitness Club
DARA Fall Open	Nov. 23	Centural	DE	YMCA
MO High School League Top Seed and Doubles	Nov. 23	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Sports-CONCORD
NMRA 2013 Doubles Championship	Dec. 5-7	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club
Fran Davis Racquetball Camp Aruba	Dec. 5-12			TBA
2013 MO High School League Winter Rollout	Dec. 6-7	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Sports-CONCORD
2013 Fran Davis Racquetball Camp	Dec. 6-8	Las Vegas	NV	ClubSport Green Valley
2013 Indiana State Doubles Championships	Dec. 7-8	Schererville	IN	Omni 41 Health & Fitness Connection
Frosty Open Indoor Shoot-out	Dec. 7-8	Fountain Valley	CA	Los Caballeros
2013 RAM State Doubles Championships	Dec. 7-8	Mt. Clemens	MI	Total Sports
Snow Ball Doubles	Dec. 11-15	Milwaukie	OR	Eastside Athletic Club
2013 Maverick Holiday Racquetball Shootout	Dec. 14	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club
2013 WA Kent Doubles	Dec. 14	Kent	WA	Kent Commons
2013 Vetta Sports Holiday Charity Classic	Dec. 21	St. Louis	MO	Vetta Sports-CONCORD

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L-R: Huff, Carson, Gudinas, Rajsich, Rojas, Ellis. Story & photo, courtesy Cheryl Kirk

## US Team Travels to Colombia for World Games

Four U.S. athletes qualified to compete in the World Games through their performances last August at the IRF World Championships in the Dominican Republic. US Team players Rocky Carson, Cheryl Gudinas, Rhonda Rajsich, and Jose Rojas traveled to Cali, Colombia, in late July, accompanied by US Team Coach Dave Ellis and Trainer Brent Huff.

The World Games, including 4,000 athletes from more than 90 countries competing in 31 sports, took place July 25-August 4. Occurring every four years, this was the first time the World Games was held in South America. Racquetball was one of the charter members of the World Games that first took place in Santa Clara (USA) in 1981.

Each of the U.S. Team athletes earned their spot in the semi-finals but then lost (three to Mexico, one to Colombia). That put them into the unenviable position of playing off for the bronze against each other!

The first semi featured Cheryl Gudinas vs. Rhonda Rajsich. Rajsich took the first game, and in the second game at 14-14, she hit a shot she felt was good. The referee and line judges called the shot down, but Gudinas, in a moving show of sportsmanship, agreed to a replay. After going back and forth a couple more times, Rajsich scored the final point for the match win. The crowd was wild in appreciation of this playoff match!

Rocky Carson and Jose Rojas then took the court for the men's playoff. Playing to packed stands, including IOC delegates and other VIPs, they gave a spectacular show that resulted in a standing ovation when the match concluded. It was Rocky in the tiebreaker.

It's always great to see the U.S. come out on top, but this time it wasn't to be. However, their sportsmanship and their respect for the game was clearly inspiring to the SRO crowd of spectators. Those of us who witnessed it couldn't have been more proud of the U.S. players!



# International Updates

## IRF World Seniors Racquetball Championships

by Cheryl Kirk | Photo by Tina Marchie

The International Racquetball Federation was pleased to present this annual event for the 29th consecutive year! WSRC Council President Paula Sperling and WSRC Executive Director Gary Mazaroff head up the hard-working group that coordinates this much-anticipated event every August. The committee members are Joe Gellman (VP), Carol Gellman (Secretary), Sandy Schauer (Treasurer), Bob Anderson, Jane Bentley, Felicia A. Duran, Luke St. Onge, and Edwina Waddington. This group, along with a fantastic team of volunteers, provides the backbone of the experience for the players and fans.

Players from 14 countries competed for medals and glory, including athletes from Bolivia, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Guatemala, India, Japan, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South Korea, Taiwan, United States (21 states), and Venezuela.

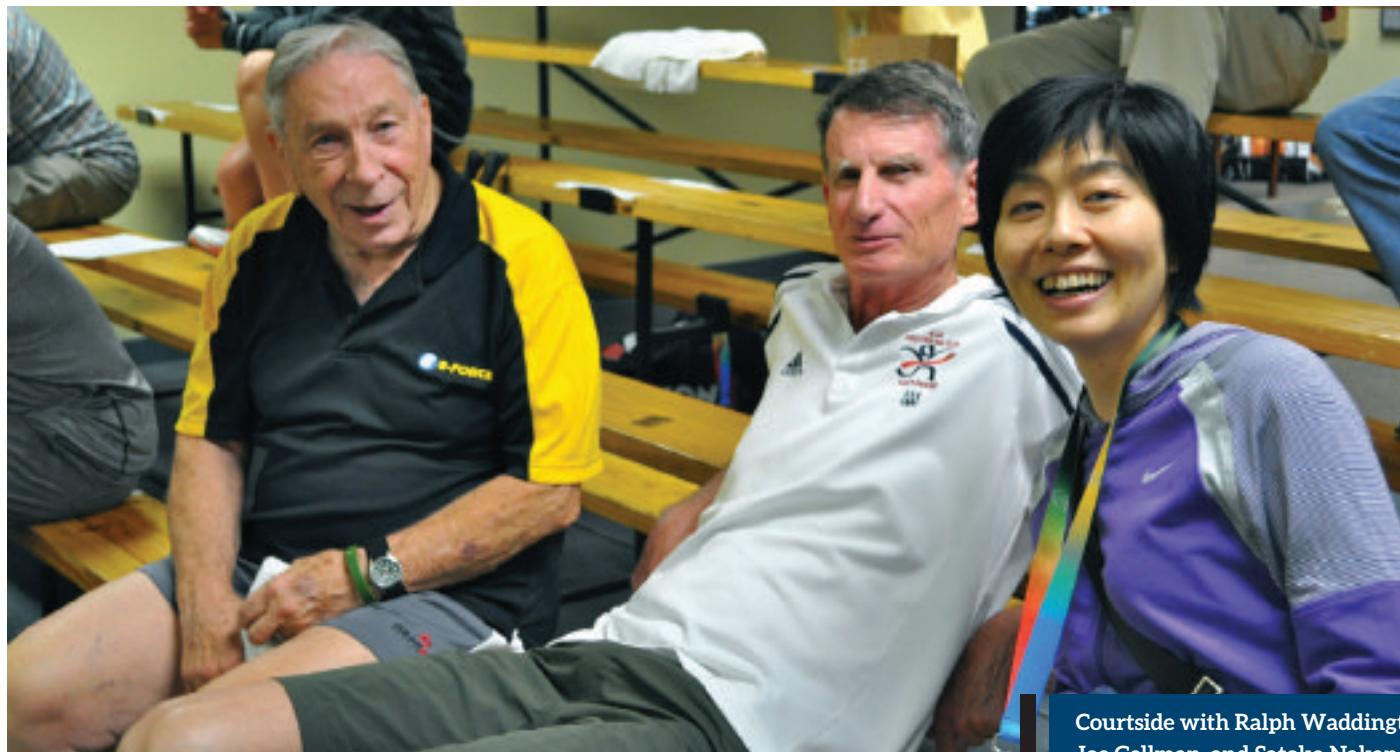
In this self-refereed event, players' endurance was tested, especially that of those who were somehow compelled to enter two divisions (many of which were round robins)! The most played by any one person was 17 matches of 3 games to 11. That's a lot of court time!

The IRF wishes to thank the sponsors who helped to make this such a great event. Gold sponsor were E-Force, Head/Penn Racquet Sports, MCM Elegante' Hotel, Sombra Cosmetics, NM Sports & Wellness. Ektelon was a Silver sponsor, and the Bronze sponsors were Gearbox, Mark's Casa Dealerships, NM Sports Authority, Wilson, Harrow Sports, and Pro Kennex. An impressive number of companies, restaurants and individuals too numerous to list here also supported the WSRC via contributions to the world-class silent auction.

So many volunteers contributed to this great experience. One dedicated volunteer, Joe Williams, couldn't make it to Albuquerque this year, but he spent many, many hours at home on the computer doing back-of-the-house work to help take the pressure off of the staff. Thanks, Joe!

Lucy Zachrisson, Pan American Racquetball Confederation (PARC) VP of Women's Development, hosted a reception for the women players on Friday night. Let's call it a party instead...the spirit of the many women (and a few good men) who stopped by for a beverage, munchies, prize drawings, and conversation made this a fun gathering where one could kick up one's heels or kick back, however the spirit moved.

The people here at the event really make it very special indeed. It's like old home week...so many people have been coming for years and years, and the new ones are embraced as well. Cindy Tilbury and I came up with an idea on Thursday while we were supposed to be playing our match: a "guess the occupation" challenge. Due to the fast pace of the tournament, we didn't quite pull it off, but we still thought the compiled list was pretty fascinating. This is not all-inclusive, but we identified WSRC players in the following lines of work (either current or retired): eye doctor, surgeons (2), high school history teacher, national federation presidents (2), catering business owners, national team coach, photographer, correctional institution guard (!), nurse, ballet instructor, headhunter, economist, systems engineers, insurance claims adjuster, physical therapist, veterinarian, Air Force colonel, professional Facebook poster, electric utility engineer, college math professor, geologist, and...get this...a retired Air Force general and a former CIA operative. Racquetball people are fascinating!



Courtside with Ralph Waddington, Joe Gellman, and Satoko Nakano

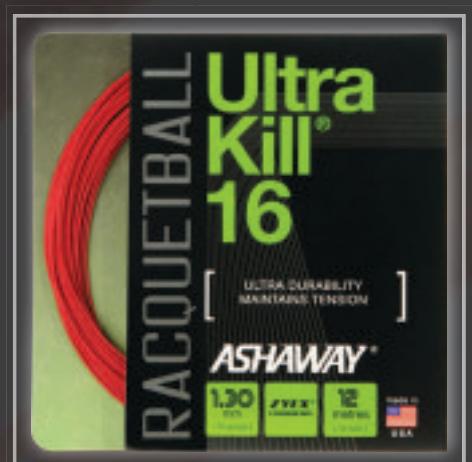
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