



Down the Line

"Dedicated to promoting the game of Racquetball"

Vol. 23
no. 1

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

I just don't know where to begin. There is so much going on in the L.R.A. and so little space to write about it. If you're out there saying there can't be much going on because racquetball is on the decline in Louisiana, let me give you a few things to think about. Let's start with last year. The L.R.A. hosted FIFTEEN (15) sanctioned tournaments in 1997. That's the most sanctioned tournaments in one year this decade. The *Summer Cooler Pro-Am* was the biggest one yet with over 175 entries and \$15,000.00 in prize money. *State Singles* was huge, boasting over 180 entries. We were also proud to host the *Adult Regionals* at LSU with over 170 entries from six states. Do you think that's too much racquetball to handle? There's more. The average number of entries in a local tournament last year was 125 which made those two A.M. matches so much fun. We laughed, we cried, there was death, there was life. We partied; **MAN, DID WE PARTY!**

I am sure that I forgot something, but overall the 1997 season was fantastic. It will only get better.

(see PRESIDENT'S NOTE - page 2)

EDITOR'S COLUMN

This begins a new series of "Down the Line", your L.R.A. Newsletter. At the U.S.R.A. leadership conference in Colorado Springs last month, it became evident to me that after getting your membership money and applications into the U.S.R.A., the next most important thing is your newsletter.

Joe Sherrill, a recently elected Board of Directors member and an absolute computer wizard (that's his business), has graciously stepped in and taken over as your Director of Membership and Ranking while I have moved to the position of Director of News and Media. It will be my primary job to write and edit the quarterly newsletter and see to it that we get as much publicity as possible from the media. In another story on page 13 about the U.S.R.A. Leadership Conference you can read why media publicity is so vitally important.

Please remember that the President and all the members of the Board of Directors are here to serve you and promote the game we all love:

RACQUETBALL!

If you don't write and let us know, we haven't the foggiest notion of what you want!

May all your shots be rollouts!

Fritz Owens

e-mail: fritzowens@worldnet.att.net fax: 504-865-9630

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

page 2

What about the future you ask? The 1998 season is going to be explosive. *State Singles* will take place at LSU. Veterans of the LRA will remember the awards dinner and party at *State Singles*; we're bringing it back this year. Spread the word and make plans to attend.

The *Adult Regionals* will be held at *The Courthouse* in Jackson, MS. You won't want to miss this tournament because you'll need it to qualify for the *NATIONALS*.

Did you say that you're not going to *Nationals* because it's only age divisions and you don't want to get beat by Marty or Reuben or Dave or whoever? Well, you don't have an excuse this year.

For the first time in two forevers, skill levels will be offered as well as skill levels within your age division. **Everybody** has a chance to win! The LRA's goal is to have at least 30 members represent Louisiana at *Nationals*. It sounds like a lot but it is a goal I think we can achieve.

If you have been to *Nationals*, TELL people about it because I know you loved it and can't wait to go back. I personally can't wait for the *Elmwood Pro-Am* in August; everyone has a chance to see the premier players of our beloved game in our own backyard. The LRA is also working on media coverage of some local tournaments. I am not talking about a quick bite on the news. I mean full match coverage on cable access.

More about that later.

Juniors are booming in Louisiana thanks to Debbie Spica, Richard Powell and Bo Champagne. If your kids are not playing racquetball, they're missing an opportunity, especially one that can be a family activity. I could go on about the Juniors, but let the Junior reps do that job.

There are many local tournaments scheduled for this year; I would like to mention one in particular. The *Junior Rollout Tournament* helps raise money for Juniors to travel to national tournaments, buy uniforms, etc. Last year's tournament was a great success with over 150 entries. Debbie Spica and her Juniors worked very hard on this production and sincerely appreciate the support of the LRA member family.

Well, this is only a fourteen page newsletter, and you probably need to go practice. I look forward to seeing everyone at *State*. If you're thinking of taking some time off from racquetball, you should have done it last year because this year will be more spectacular than *John Davis'* drive serve!

Al Schof



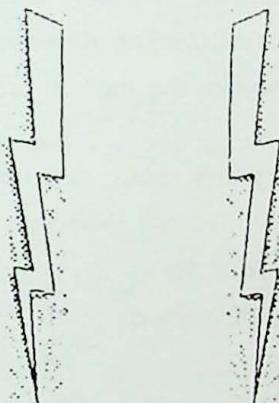
**DID YOU KNOW? Cross
training in another sport like swimming
can radically improve your game?
Try it. You'll LIKE it!**



WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

One of the hardest jobs in a "not-for-profit" organization is finding volunteers. They are the fuel that runs the engine that drives this whole endeavor. The following is a list of jobs that desperately need to be done for YOUR L.R.A. If you can help at all, please, submit your name and skills to one of the Directors or call, e-mail or fax your newsletter editor. The rewards are great!

PHOTOGRAPHERS FOR TOURNAMENTS
 ORGANIZER FOR END OF YEAR BANQUET
 NEW ORLEANS JUNIOR COORDINATOR
 TOURNAMENT ANALYST AND REPORTER
 REPORTER TO DO INTERVIEWS



DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO'S A COUCH POTATO?

TELL THEM HOW MUCH FUN IT IS! HOW GOOD YOU FEEL AFTER PLAYING A COUPLE OF GAMES. HOW IT MAKES YOU LESS HUNGRY. HOW IT BURNS MORE CALORIES THAN ANY OTHER SPORT EXCEPT CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING! YOU MIGHT BRING A NEW MEMBER INTO THE ORGANIZATION AND HAVE SOME FUN WITH A FRIEND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT.



One of the most impressive jobs in the last year has been done by our Director of Programs, Debbie Spica. The number of youngsters that she has persuaded to join the program particularly for Juniors is astounding. We need to give her a big hand for all her hard work that brought such great results. If you know of a young one that is interested in racquetball, get Debbie to talk to them. She'll make a believer out of them in nothing flat!



The following closing dates and publishing dates should be useful to those of you that would like to have something published in the quarterly newsletter. The sooner we get the info, the better chance you have of seeing it in print. Human interest stories, candid pictures, tips for playing better tournaments or games and the like are all welcome.

Closing Dates	Publishing Dates
January 15	February 15
April 15	May 15
July 15	August 15
October 15	November 15

TIPS AND STUFF LIKE THAT



RACQUETBALL TIPS

by Pattie Schof, Certified AmPro Instructor

The Forehand Stroke - Stepping into the Ball

Your stride is very important. The step you take into a ball determines where, and how effectively, you can hit a shot. The following key points explain the important areas to cover for stepping into the ball:

1. When you stride into the ball, you should step a shoulder's distance apart with your feet, or just slightly wider. The longer your legs are, the longer your stride can be.
2. Both legs should remain bent throughout your step to maintain balance, consistency, and power in the shot.
3. Your step or stride should move in the direction of the front wall, not toward the side wall. The straighter your step, the more power and control you will have on a shot. Try to avoid stepping directly into the side wall for a shot. This makes cross court shots difficult, and you lose power because your shot momentum is moving in one direction, and your body is moving in another.

CLINICS

Join Pattie Schof (Ektelon Team Member & Certified AmPro Instructor) and/or Al Schof (Ektelon Team Member) at the Heritage Sports Center once a month for -FREE- racquetball clinics. 10:00 a.m. sharp on the following dates:

Beginner's Clinics: Mar. 14 & May 30, 1998

Beginner's/Intermediate: Apr. 26 & Jun 27, 1998



The Sport Experience

from the book "Racquetball" by Robert P. Pangrazi c. 1987

The following activities may help you develop a better sense of concentration if you find it easy to be distracted during a match.

1. When you have a few quiet moments, concentrate on watching an imaginary ball move throughout the court. Develop mental images of moving into position, setting up, making an effective shot, and moving to a defensive position. Work on keeping distractions from your mind.
2. Practice the activity above in a noisy and distracting setting. It is quite possible that you may only be able to do so for a few seconds before a distraction catches your attention. Try to increase the duration of the mental practice sessions.
3. During an imaginary solo practice session, visually concentrate on the ball. Do not take your eyes off the ball at any time. Maintain your focus on the ball for as long as possible before being distracted.
4. Try the above activity while practicing with a partner. Try to tune out all extraneous noise such as your partner talking, negative thoughts, and spectators observing. The more successful you are with this activity, the more you will feel as though you are the only person in the court. Imagine the flow and feel of the match and how good it feels to have all extraneous thoughts "tuned out".
5. Carry over activities 3 & 4 into actual practice sessions. When you feel your mind wandering to thoughts or external distractions, refocus and practice concentrating.
6. Develop a phrase you will say to yourself when a poor or missed shot is made. Say this phrase three times between points while preparing to receive or serve the ball.



TOURNAMENT TALK

page 7

Tournament Results

01/09/1998 HERITAGE ROLLOUT

Men's Open

1. MARK BLOOM
2. DAVID RAHN
3. JEFF BLOOM
4. JOHN DAVIS

Men's A

1. MARK VOLTERE
2. GEORGE ANTHON, JR.
3. BILL BOADA
4. ALBERT H. SCHOF, III

Men's B

1. GEORGE ANTHON, JR.
2. JIM LESLIE
3. CHARLES E. LEE
4. BILL BOADA

Men's C

1. CHRIS DACOSTA
2. JAMES NELSON
3. MICHAEL CURRIER
4. ANTHONY P.

Men's D

1. GERARD M. SCHMITZ
2. CYNTHIA M. GORDON
3. TAMMY THOMPSON
4. JIM ALISE

Men's All Age

1. JERRY DYE
2. CHARLES E. LEE
3. WARREN REUTHER JR.
4. R. J. TAMPLAIN

Women's A Singles

1. BONNIE BEE
2. PATRICIA B SCHOF
3. KAREN KATTENGILL
4. CYNTHIA M. GORDON

01/30/1998 LANCE NELSON

Men's Open

1. TODD O'NEIL
2. CHRIS COLE
3. DAVID RAHN
4. JOHN DAVIS

Men's A

1. ALBERT H. SCHOF, III
2. STUART MARTIN
3. JIM LESLIE
4. BILL BOADA

Cons. TERRENCE PIERCE

Men's B

1. PATRICK OMUNDSON
2. CHRIS DACOSTA
3. RUSTY POWELL
4. ELLIOTT MISTICH, JR.

Men's C

1. MICHAEL CURRIER
2. CORWYN ALDREDGE
3. DUSTY NASSIF
4. WES McDONALD

Cons. CALVIN AHINGA

Women's A

1. JANETH RECTOR
2. SONIA MONK
3. PATRICIA B SCHOF
4. NEYDA LESLIE

Cons. LISA HAYDEN

Women's C

1. STACY DESHOTELS
2. CANDY ARQUIETT
3. DARLA WEBB
4. NAOMI HERRON



TOP TEN

page 8



Men's Open

1. 519 JOHN DAVIS
2. 472 DAVID RAHN
3. 218 STEVE ROGERS
4. 186 SCOTT DAVIS
5. 115 MARK BLOOM
6. 110 JAIME ARROYAVE, JR.
7. 74 DANNY BORDELON
8. 74 RICHARD B. ROADWELL
9. 74 STUART MARTIN
10. 72 MARK HICDON

Men's A

1. 1258 ALBERT H. SCHOF, III
2. 674 MARK HIGDON
3. 657 TERRENCE PIERCE
4. 514 GEORGE ANTHON, JR.
5. 513 MARK VOLTERE
6. 504 ROY LAUDUMIEY
7. 468 BILL BOADA
8. 468 KEN HOOD
9. 331 STUART MARTIN
10. 278 ELLIOTT MISTICH, JR.

Men's B

1. 1045 CHARLES E. LEE
2. 1021 BILL BOADA
3. 1020 GEORGE ANTHON, JR.
4. 844 JIM LESLIE
5. 688 ELLIOTT MISTICH, JR.
6. 493 PATRICK OMUNDSON
7. 424 RUSTY POWELL
8. 419 CHRIS DACOSTA
9. 281 RICKY WILLIS
10. 240 G. EARL TEABOUT

Men's C

1. 961 ROBERT VANCE
2. 744 MICHAEL CURRIER
3. 663 ANTHONY P. ZERINGUE
4. 625 PATRICIA B SCHOF
5. 464 WAYNE SKINNER
6. 443 TOMMY A. RIGSBY, JR.
7. 400 CHRIS DACOSTA
8. 360 JAMES NELSON
9. 274 FRANK OLAIVAR
10. 274 JOE SHERRILL

Men's D

1. 518 GERARD M. SCHMITZ
2. 494 DUSTIN KIDDER
3. 397 BRANDON MCGHEE
4. 192 CASEY MORAN
5. 187 DAVID C. KEY
6. 166 CYNTHIA M. CORDON
7. 139 SIMEON BASINGER
8. 128 PAT TASSIN
9. 126 SHANE PELLERIN
10. 125 TAMMY THOMPSON

Women's Open

1. 77 DEBBIE SPICA
2. 67 KAREN KATTENGILL
3. 48 PATRICIA B. SCHOF
4. 38 SANDRA GRIFFITHS

Women's D

1. 102 DEBBIE MACK
2. 13 BERNICE POWELL

Women's A

1. 238 PATRICIA B SCHOF
2. 173 JANETH RECTOR
3. 117 BONNIE BEE
4. 96 NEYDA LESLIE
5. 64 MARY M. RAGLAND
6. 48 KAREN KATTENGILL
7. 38 TAMMY THOMPSON
8. 38 CYNTHIA M. GORDON
9. 19 BECKY HISEY

Women's B

1. 192 NEYDA LESLIE
2. 120 BECKY HISEY
3. 112 MONICA POWELL
4. 56 MANDY FARRIS
5. 16 CYNTHIA M. GORDON
6. 16 TAMMY THOMPSON
7. 16 ANNE PEEK

Women's C

1. 244 CANDY ARQUIETT
2. 143 TAMMY THOMPSON
3. 115 CYNTHIA M. CORDON
4. 102 MONICA POWELL
5. 90 KAREN PROSSER
6. 72 MELANIE COOK
7. 71 KARY GILLIS
8. 56 AMBER L. MOREAU
9. 14 DEBBIE MACK
10. 13 DEBBIE IMBRAGUGLIO

Juniors 10 & Under

1. 101 JAMES L. PATTERSON
2. 72 STEPHEN ROGERS, JR.
3. 58 SARA GARRETT
4. 14 PATRICK GRACE, JR.
5. 14 BRANDI ALEXANDER

Juniors 12 & Under

1. 360 DAVID C. KEY
2. 218 BLAKE WHITTLE
3. 194 ROBERT VANCE, JR.
4. 68 SIMEON BASINGER
5. 54 KEVIN KIDDER
6. 41 AARON FITZGERALD
7. 27 WILLIAM NIX
8. 27 RAFAEL BERRIO
9. 14 LAURA GARRETT

Juniors 14 & Under

1. 115 DAVID C. KEY
2. 101 SIMEON BASINGER
3. 72 AARON FITZGERALD
4. 14 ROBERT VANCE, JR.
5. 14 CASEY MORAN
6. 14 DUSTIN KIDDER
7. 14 STEVE SOPER

Men's 35+

1. 230 JAMES BAYHI
2. 219 R. J. TAMPLAIN
3. 205 GEORGE ANTHON, JR.
4. 168 RANDY LEA
5. 154 REX BEARD
6. 128 TERRENCE PIERCE
7. 116 CHARLES E. LEE
8. 102 KEN HOOD
9. 67 G. EARL TEABOUT
10. 64 NEIL WHITE

Men's 45+

1. 199 CLARENCE SIMMONS
2. 171 CYRIL HENTZE
3. 96 WARREN REUTHER
4. 90 BO CHAMPAGNE
5. 78 KEN HOOD
6. 38 G. EARL TEABOUT
7. 38 AL REACLE
8. 38 JAMES BIXLER
9. 34 JOEL MARKERT
10. 19 ROGER ANASTASIO

Men's 55+

1. 166 WARREN REUTHER JR.
2. 104 EUGENE FERRIS
3. 90 RAY RONQUILLO, JR.
4. 69 STEVE KASHMAN
5. 51 RICHARD SOUSA
6. 13 ROBERT BAUDRY

Men's All Age

1. 173 JERRY DYE
2. 154 CHARLES E. LEE
3. 105 R. J. TAMPLAIN
4. 105 WARREN REUTHER JR.
5. 38 CLARENCE SIMMONS
6. 38 G. EARL TEABOUT
7. 38 KEN HOOD
8. 38 RAY RONQUILLO, JR.
9. 19 DOUG WOODS-LEDET

Announcements

LRA/USRA 1998 EVENT CALENDAR

ESPN



PROMUS HOTELS U.S. OPEN
THURSDAY, FEB. 12, 1998 AT 11:30 p.m.

MANHATTAN ATHLETIC CLUB, at Harvey, LA
Racquet around the clock - February 27 thru March 1, 1998

WILSON USRA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS - St. Louis, MO
March 6, 1998 thru March 8, 1998

1998 STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS
at L.S.U., BATON ROUGE MAR.20-22, 1998

E-FORCE USRA 29TH NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATES AT
PHOENIX, AZ MARCH 25 THRU MARCH 29, 1998

NMRA U.S. GOLDEN MASTERS SINGLES/DOUBLES at
Pittsburgh, PA April 2 thru April 4, 1998

WORLD GYM at Harvey, LA
Killshot Classic XI April 3 thru April 5, 1998

12th TOURNAMENT OF THE AMERICAS/PANAM QUALIFIER
at Winnipeg, Canada April 3 thru April 11, 1998

COURTHOUSE RACQUET CLUB at Jackson, Ms
1998 USRA REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS April 16-19, 1998

TBA
Nationals Warmup Tournament, May 8-10, 1998

HOUSTON DOWNTOWN YMCA at Houston, TX
1998 USRA/EKTELON NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS, May 20-25, '98

ELMWOOD FITNESS CENTER, at Harahan, LA
1998 June Classic June 12 thru June 14, 1998

1998 LRA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

President: Al Schof
4220 Paradis Lane, Kenner, LA 70065
H (504) 468-2813 B (504) 553-0119

Director of Scheduling: Pattie Schof
4220 Paradis Lane, Kenner, LA 70065
H (504) 468-2813 W (504) 837-0730

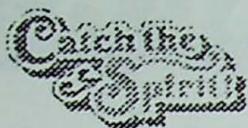
Director of Programs: Debbie Spica
11888 Longridge, #3115 Baton Rouge, 70816
H (504) 296-8117 W (504) 273-6400

Director of Finance
(Pattie Schof is substituting)
VACANT

Director of Promotions
(Al Schof is substituting)
VACANT

Director of Membership/Ranking: Joe Sherrill
218 Wade St. Luling, LA 70070
H & W (504) 785-8682

Director of News & Media: Fritz Owens
4819 Walmsley Ave. New Orleans, 70125
H & W (504) 865-7027



STATE SINGLES!

MARCH 20, 21, & 22, 1998

page 6

**THE STATE SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS WILL BE HELD THIS YEAR
ON MARCH 20, 21, AND 22 AT LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY.**

**On February 4th, 1998, the Louisiana Racquetball
Association Board of Directors met and unanimously approved
the following rules for this tournament:**

All winners must referee to advance

There will be a strict enforcement of the rule:

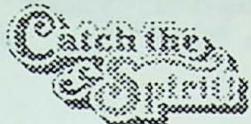
NO PAY - NO PLAY

**You must have your U.S.R.A. card and/or your L.R.A. card
with you to sign in. You will NOT be allowed on the court to
play a match if your dues are not paid up. If you don't check in
early and are waiting in line to pay your dues or don't show up
on time and your match is scheduled to start,**

THE 10 MINUTE FORFEITURE RULE WILL APPLY!

**It has become necessary for us to do this because of the
large number of entries into this tournament. We are trying to
start everyone on time but lack of attention on the part of a few**

(See State Singles - page 9)



STATE SINGLES

(Continued from page 6)



page 9

members to their membership status has put us behind right from the start in the last 4 State tournaments. It's time to put a stop to the actions of a few that are affecting the play of everyone else.

Many players wait until the last minute to check in and then get bent out of shape when they can't get on the court because they have to wait to pay their dues.

Listen, folks. We don't think it's out of line to expect all of you over the age of 21 to act like responsible adults. You **MUST** understand that you have to pay your dues to get your competitive license **AND YOUR TOURNAMENT INSURANCE IN FORCE BEFORE YOU PLAY!** Otherwise you leave the organization and the facility in jeopardy, not to mention yourself.

Take a moment now and check your membership expiration date. It's on this newsletter, page 14, on the label we used to mail it to you. Above the fold is a renewal application. Why not take the time **NOW** to fill out the application and send it along to us with your check for **\$25.00**? Your new membership card will be waiting for you at the check in desk at the State Singles Tournament.

YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID!

Your Louisiana Racquetball Association Board of Directors



JUNIOR TALK!

page 10

JUNIORS MAKE 1997 A SUCCESS!

by Debbie Spica

The increase of young players on our courts helped set attendance records in tournaments during 1997. Average tournament participation increased by fifteen (15) players. Through the efforts of racquetball enthusiasts like Debbie Spica and Richard Powell of Baton Rouge, John Davis of Lake Charles, Pattie Schof and Vicki Garrett of New Orleans as well as many others, more and more young people are being introduced to our sport, helping establish a foundation for the future of Louisiana racquetball.

1997 was also the year of Louisiana's largest junior team. The state was represented by seven (7) young players who proudly competed and enhanced racquetball within and outside our state. Members of the 1997 Louisiana Junior Racquetball Team are as follows:

Brandi Alexander	8 years old	Baton Rouge
William Nix	10 years old	Ruston
Rusty Powell	13 years old	Baton Rouge
David Key	14 years old	Baton Rouge
Brandon McGhee	14 years old	Baton Rouge
Dustin Kidder	15 years old	Baton Rouge
Shane Pellerin	15 years old	Baton Rouge

1997 Junior Team Outstanding accomplishments:

Brandi Alexander
ranked 6th nationally, girls 8 and under

William Nix and Rusty Powell
Junior National Championship participants

Mark Bloom
National Champion, 18 and under
Runnerup, World Junior Champion, 18 and under

At the Junior Regional Championships the Louisiana Junior Team received:

4 Gold medals, 6 Silver medals and 5 bronze medals

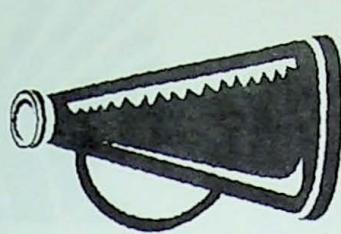
Not only did the Junior Team compete well at tournaments, they could also be found assisting with tournament duties and clinics. In fact, the largest tournament held in 1997 was the Junior hosted Rollout Roundup at Calloway's Health Club in Baton Rouge. Over 100 players supported the fund-raiser. The Junior team also hosted a player's clinic in August with Pro Kennex player John Ellis. For \$10 local players received 3 hours of instruction from the number 4 ranked professional player.

The 1997 Junior season laid a strong foundation for the future of our sport. We should all be very proud of our young players and support them whenever we can.



The Junior Team would like to thank the following companies for their tremendous support during 1997:

AAS Company	A-Bear Tire
Barry & Carol Alexander	Celebration Station
Copeland's of New Orleans	Dixieland
E Force	Gary Johnson
Glenn M. Kidder, D.D.S.	Kinks Automotive
Lindsey's Amusements	Papa John's Pizza
Playtime Awards	Powerade
Pro Kennex	Premier Office
Products, Inc.	Semolina's
Sicily's Pizza	The Sports Authority
Super Fresh	
W & W Automotive Specialist, Inc.	
Bill Whittle and Associates	



ATTENTION

page 11

We Need New Faces! New YOUNG Faces!

by Debbie Spica, Director of Programs

The Louisiana Racquetball Association is preparing to form the 1998 Junior Racquetball Team. All young players between the ages of 7 and 18 are eligible to participate. The Junior Team will be comprised of two categories. One being the Junior Development team for those players not quite ready for competitive racquetball but willing to practice and learn the skills needed to progress. The second category is for the ten young players with advanced skills looking to progress to the next level of competitive racquetball. All players will become a member of these two junior teams.

To participate, submit your name, address, telephone number and a short biography highlighting how long you've been playing racquetball and why you would like to join the 1998 L.R.A. Junior Racquetball Team. Mail the application to:

L.R.A. Junior Team
c/o Debbie Spica
11888 Longridge #3115
Baton Rouge, LA 70816

Deadline to submit Information is February 27, 1998.

Once the information has been received, juniors will be notified of clinic dates and sites.

If you need additional information please contact:

Debbie Spica at (504) 296-8117



ODDS AND ENDS

page 12



Nominations for the L.R.A. Board of Directors

At the State Singles Tournament in March, we will be electing two new members to the Board of Directors. The positions to be filled are:

1. Director of Finance
2. Director of Promotions

To avoid popularity contests, there is a procedure that you must follow. If you would like to nominate someone that you know would like to make a significant contribution to the sport we love, you MUST have that person call up our president, Al Schof.

He will then explain the criteria of the position that is open. If the potential nominee is willing to meet the requirements of the job, you can then submit their name to the Board of Directors. They will then place that person on the ballot.

Nominations must be received by March 13th to be eligible for the election at State Singles.



You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation. -- Plato

QUALIFICATIONS FOR STATE SINGLES

To play in the Louisiana Racquetball Association State Singles Championships, you must meet the following requirements:

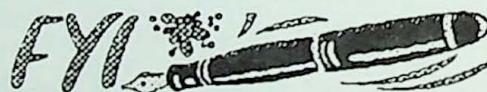
To play in Skill Divisions:

1. Your membership must be current
2. You must have played in an LRA sanctioned tournament in the last year.

To play in Age Divisions:

1. Your membership must be current.

Note: IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO PLAY IN A SANCTIONED EVENT TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR AGE DIVISIONS!



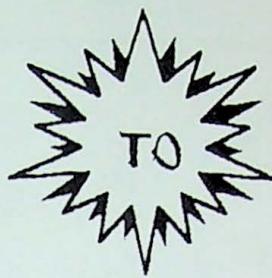
CONSOLATION MATCHES WILL BE PLAYED AT STATE SINGLES!

If you lose your first round match, you are entitled to play in Consolation ONLY if you sign up immediately after the match. Failure to sign up for consolation immediately leaves you subject to forfeiture and being left out of the draw.



Tired of not seeing tournament entries or the newsletter at your club? Make sure we have the address of your club correct and they'll get there!

LETTERS



THE EDITOR

page 13

Here's a letter we received about 18 month's ago. Since this column doesn't have any letters to publish yet, this seems like a good start. It was addressed to me when I was the Director of Membership & Ranking.

Dear Fritz,

I am an avid racquetball player and continue to support the LRA & the AARA. However, I continue not to receive the services for my support, i.e. I have not received a membership card in over two (2) years, nor have I received a magazine in over a year. In 1995, for which you are aware, I paid my dues twice because of a mistake by the AARA.

I have also stopped playing in tournaments for the following reasons:

1. the tournaments are allowed to drag out too long.
2. People are allowed too much time to warm-up.
3. Time-out rules are never adhered to or enforced.
4. Delay of game/match forfeit rules are never enforced.

Item 1 is usually a result of items 2, 3, and 4

An example of this is as follows: In an Elmwood tournament last year, my partner and I were playing A-Doubles. At match start time only one of the members on the other team was at the court to start the match. After five minutes passed we inquired about the other team member and were informed that he went to purchase a new glove. The subject opponent did not return until 45 minutes after the prescribed (already delayed) start match time, then proceeded to warm up for over 7 minutes. Now realize that because of other tournament delays, the prescribed start time was already an hour later than the original posted match start time. We did win the match. However, we had to go directly to our next match scheduled, as winners of the described match. We lost the match, and although I don't use this as an excuse, the frustration of the described situation above, coupled with the delays and having to cancel other commitments contributed to making a fun situation miserable.

I write the above not as a complaint, but as a recommendation. I can tell you many people share my same concern regarding the management of the tournaments. Realize, no one wants to win by forfeit. People go to tournaments because they want to play and because they enjoy the heightened competition. But I can tell you, if the tournaments were managed according to the rules, and all possible managed to stay on schedule, many people would start playing again. Consequently, those players described above would either conform with the rules or quit. In closing, anything you can do to resolve my membership problems would be greatly appreciated.

* * *

I'm happy to report that this member's problems with the membership were solved satisfactorily. Additionally, this letter has been circulated to all tournament directors since receiving it and we're seeing more attention to the rules that are so necessary to make tournaments flow smoothly.



The trip to Colorado Springs in January for the USRA Leadership conference went smoothly. The weather was great and the accommodations at the United States Olympic Training Center were more than adequate. Even better, the food was really good. After the opening remarks by Jim Hiser and a talk by Jennifer Westbrook about the real risks involved in allowing nonmembers on the court during a sanctioned tournament, the conference soared into high gear with our National Membership Director, Kevin Joyce, asking the very thought provoking question, "Why am I here?" I found this set the tone for the whole conference. All of the people who are running our National organization, the U.S.R.A., from Heather Fender, the new receptionist and customer service rep on up the ladder to Luke St. Onge, our Executive Director, are exceptionally pleasant, abundantly knowledgeable, and full of energy. The three day conference covered an enormous amount of material, much of which is going to take me another 3 months to absorb. To me, the most important talk was about media relations. It came across as the following equation: media publicity=corporate sponsors=tv time=media publicity. If you don't have the corporate sponsors, you can't get the tv time which means no media publicity which means no corporate sponsors. To break into the chain, someone has to take a chance on you. ESPN has done just that. If you want to see our sport in the Olympics and up there with other sports on TV, you'd better bombard ESPN and all of the local media with your letters about how much you liked it and want to see more. The letters REALLY work. In addition to an abundance of seminars on juniors and club safety and the U.S. Open and a bunch of other things, there was a very humorous talk by Jim Turner, the pro football kicker of Denver's Ring of Fame, talks by all the Industry representatives, AmPro and referee certification and of course a very stirring talk by our Executive Director. And of course, the parties.

Unfortunately, I only made one and that was the Saturday night banquet. And I only lasted about 15 minutes. The entire time I was there I had high altitude sickness: nausea the whole time, lightheaded, waking up in the middle of the night gasping for breath, having to sit down after walking ten steps too fast, nosebleeds the last two days. You know, all that kind of stuff that doesn't make things too pleasant. I took Luke St. Onge aside the night of the banquet and told him that I was sorry but I was going to have to go back to the dorm because of the problem with the altitude. He was very gracious about it and kindly lined up someone to drive me back. I told him that it was a great conference, I learned a lot, the people in the organization are a great bunch. Then I said "however, if you all want to see me again, you're going to have to come to the lowlands 'cause I ain't comin' back!" Thanks to Al and Pattie Schof and Joe Shernill, I managed to make it out of there. Maybe they could have the next conference in Puerto Rico? Las Vegas? New Orleans? It was still a terrific conference!

The Editor

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