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PREVIEW INSIDE





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ON THE COVER

One of her favorite shots from the Beach Bash, WOR photographer Belinda Dettman captured Nelson Deida tracking the ball while partner Richie Miller leapt for the shot in the finals of the Pro Doubles.

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Submissions

Racquetball Magazine welcomes submissions from our members and readers. If you have an idea for an article, propose it by email to: magazine@usra.org. All submissions are subject to editing.

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Fall	JUL 1	AUG 1	SEP 30
Winter	OCT 1	NOV 1	DEC 30

CORRECTION: On page 30 of the WINTER issue, Bev Supanick's name was misspelled in a photo caption.

FREE! Get the latest digital magazine, email updates, discounts and more as an eMember of USA Racquetball. Scan the QR code or visit USARacquetball.com > Membership > Free to sign up!

Late Breaking ... Just before press time, USA Racquetball crowned Rhonda Rajsich and Jake Bredenbeck as the 2015 National Singles Champions in Denver. See full results online, and look for coverage in the Fall issue. Photo by Ken Fife.



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USA RACQUETBALL MISSION STATEMENT

USA Racquetball, recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport, is committed to our members and the growth of racquetball from recreational play to international competition.

USA RACQUETBALL CORE VALUES

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NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS & TEAM QUALIFYING

All future national events details remain tentative until entries are published and registration opens.

UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Championships
October 7-11, 2015 | Minneapolis, MN

IN 2016
National Doubles - February 10-14
Tempe, AZ | Arizona State University

National High Schools - February 24-28
Portland, OR | Multnomah Athletic Club

National Intercollegiates - March 30 - April 2
Tempe, AZ | Arizona State University

National Singles - May 25-29 | Venue TBA
Junior Olympics - June 22-26 | Venue TBA

US National Team Qualifiers & Process

The 2015-16 U.S. National Team Qualification process, which defined the 2015 Pan Am Games delegation, applied these criteria:

Singles Players (in order of qualification)

- #1 American on the IRT and LPRT Tours
- #2 American on the IRT and LPRT Tours
- National Singles U.S. Team Qualifier Champions
- #3 American on the IRT and LPRT Tours
- National Singles U.S. Team Qualifier Runners-Up
- Intercollegiate #1 Gold Singles Division Champions

Doubles Players (in order of qualification)

- National Doubles U.S. Team Qualifier Champions
- National Doubles U.S. Team Qualifier Runners-Up

All appointments to the 2015-16 U.S. National Team will run from June 1, 2015 through May 31, 2016. Pro Tour qualifiers are based on rankings following the last event that concludes prior to June 1. Added details can be found on USARacquetball.com.



FROM THE
Executive Director

By Steve Czarnecki, Executive Director
USA Racquetball

Pan Am Bound Headed to Toronto

In July, more than 6,000 athletes from 41 nations will converge in Toronto to participate in the 36 official sports of the Pan American Games. Seven American players will represent the U.S. in the 2015 Games, marking the sixth time that racquetball has been represented on the sport's grandest stage.

More so than ever, racquetball is emerging as a sport of the Americas. While the United States has won an amazing 65% of Pan Am gold medals, a total of 10 countries have medaled in the sport at the Games. Half of the top 10 players on the respective IRT and LPRT tour rankings come from other countries. While it is tempting to long for the days of American domination in international events, we should celebrate the emergence of top-level talent from so many countries.

In the U.S. we have long appreciated the sport, its many benefits, and its great players. Now, it's encouraging to see so many players from such a variety of countries spreading that message throughout the Americas and across the globe.

Of course, when it comes to international competition, we take our sports and our athletes very seriously. As Head Coach Dave Ellis likes to say, "Friends off the court and fierce competitors on the court." We expect great performances from our athletes and appreciate all of the hard work and effort they put into training and delivering their "personal bests" at marquee events like this one.

Please join me in wishing our delegation well at the upcoming Pan Am Games, July 10-26. If you have a chance to leave a message for TEAM USA at USARacquetball.com, I know the entire delegation would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

While the United States has won an amazing 65% of Pan Am gold medals, a total of 10 countries have medaled in the sport at the Games.

From the real or virtual sidelines, be sure to catch the action - either through social media updates or, better yet, by attending the Games to cheer the Team on to victory. You can also increase your impact by donating through the TEAM USA Challenge, which offers direct support to the Team that goes a very long way. In fact, donations of \$100 or more will be matched to double the value

of your gift, plus there are some great premiums available to recognize your generosity.

So here's a hearty THANK YOU to both the U.S. National Racquetball Team, and to the entire USA Racquetball family that supports its efforts. GO TEAM USA!

TEAM USA DELEGATION

MEN

Rocky Carson – #1 Singles
Jake Bredenbeck - #2 Singles
Jansen Allen – Doubles
José Rojas - Doubles

WOMEN

Rhonda Rajsich – #1 Singles & Doubles
Michelle Key - #2 Singles
Kim Russell-Waselenchuk – Doubles

STAFF

Dave Ellis – Head Coach
RO Carson – Assistant Coach
Brent Huff – Team Trainer
Cheryl Kirk – Team Leader

NATIONAL TEAM MEMBERS

MEN'S NATIONAL TEAM
Jansen Allen
Jake Bredenbeck
Rocky Carson

Tom Fuhrmann
Adam Manilla
José Rojas
Marco Rojas

WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM
Kelani Bailey
Cheryl Gudinas
Michelle Key

Rhonda Rajsich
Aimee Ruiz
Kim Russell-Waselenchuk
Janel Tisinger

PAN AMERICAN GAMES

"The Pan American Games are the world's third largest international multi-sport Games; they are only surpassed in size and scope by the Olympic Summer Games and the Asian Games." –Toronto2015.org

Racquetball has been a full medal sport in the Pan American Games since 1995.

Thirty-six sports will be contested - 28 Olympic Sports and 8 IOC Recognized Sports.

Dates for Racquetball competition:

July 19-26, 2015

Racquetball will be competed in the Pan Am Games Exhibition Center along with four other sports.

Racquetball will feature four portable courts that will become a legacy for Racquetball Canada after the Games.

The Racquetball venue is located next to the International Press Center, which will provide significant media exposure.

Fifty-six players from 12 countries will compete in Toronto: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala Mexico, USA, and Venezuela.

The format is individual player competition for the first five days and team-on-team competition for the remaining three days of the competition.

Medals will be awarded in both individual and team competitions.

All racquetball athletes and staff are under the supervision of their National Olympic Committees.

Members from the IOC program commission will be on hand to evaluate Racquetball for future Olympic Games.



Photo courtesy Larry Haemmerle

FROM THE President

By Larry Haemmerle, President
USA Racquetball Board of Directors

TOGETHER **WE ARE GLOBAL**

In the Spring issue, this column addressed the camaraderie associated with our sport's community, unified behind the new theme "Together, We Are Racquetball." Beyond those we know and appreciate as players is a far-reaching and interdependent community of board members, state associations, professional organizations, tournament directors, instructors, committees, manufacturers, and thousands of supporters and volunteers. All are passionate in the work that they do in support of our sport, and although we don't always agree

on the direction we should take, we remain united in our love for our great sport.

Sometimes we become so focused and involved in ensuring that we work toward growth and promotion in the United States, that we lose sight of the even larger global community of racquetball enthusiasts. Although our efforts cross paths from time to time, we all manage our associations and events separately.

So we are very excited that USA Racquetball's own UnitedHealthcare U.S. Open, the largest and most prestigious racquetball event in the world, will now be officially sanctioned by the International Racquetball Federation (IRF). Special thanks are in order to Doug Ganim for making our U.S. Open a true international event as it celebrates its 20th Anniversary this Fall.

I know a number of the IRF representatives, and it's very exciting that we will be able to experience the U.S. Open together. I have extended an invitation to Osvaldo Maggi, President, and Luke St. Onge, Secretary General of the IRF, to address our Board of Directors at our semi-annual Board of Directors Meeting. I see Luke St. Onge in Colorado Springs occasionally and he indicated it had been some time since our two organizations had met together. It will be an honor to not only meet with them but also to help familiarize them with all the U.S. Open has to offer.

This will be an exciting opportunity to share our thoughts on the future of the sport on both a National and International scale. The U.S. Open will be an outstanding opportunity for all of us to demonstrate that "Together, We Are GLOBAL Racquetball."

"The UnitedHealthcare US OPEN has always enjoyed great support from players from throughout the world. This new partnership with the IRF solidifies the US OPEN as the premier international racquetball competition open to all players of every skill and age," US OPEN Director Doug Ganim stated. "My vision for the US OPEN has always been to bring together ALL facets of the sport for an annual racquetball celebration. Having the IRF officially involved is a critical component to achieve this mission."

"We are thrilled to formalize this relationship with the US OPEN!" said IRF President Osvaldo Maggi. "By officially sanctioning the event, some international players will now have access to funding from their home country National Governing Body. In addition, our long-term goal with the US OPEN is to develop a true World Cup style country competition at the event. We will be working to develop a points system that will make this a reality in the years to come."

BOARD ELECTIONS

Congratulations to Leo Vasquez and Mike Wedel, who were the top vote getters of the 2015 USA Racquetball Board of Directors election and have been named to three-year terms ending in May 2018.



Leo Vasquez, of Arlington, Texas, has been a Board member for two years, serving as its Secretary, while also managing many of the online media projects for the organization. He is also the President of the Texas Racquetball Association, has extensive racquetball programming and tournament experience, and is the Director of The Maverick Athletic Club.



Mike Wedel, of Louisburg, Kansas, took his seat on the Board on May 20, 2015. He also shares extensive experience in the sport, having served on the Kansas Racquetball Association Board for the past 10 years, including time as President. Wedel serves as the tournament director for racquetball, handball, and squash tournaments at The Athletic Club of Overland Park. He has directed more than 70 racquetball tournaments and worked with all of the major organizations in the sport.

Thank you to the many USA Racquetball members who voted. Those with interest in seeking a future board seat will find more information at USARacquetball.com.

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE



**WITH YOUR SUPPORT,
WE CAN RAISE MORE THAN
\$30,000 FOR THE TEAMS!**

Support the U.S. Adult and Junior National Teams with a tax-deductible contribution today. Your support is vital to the players and coaches as they prepare to represent the United States in international competition. Funds are primarily used for travel expenses, entry fees, and training.

Donations of \$100 or more ... made in 2015 to the TEAM USA CHALLENGE ... *will be matched* by the group of generous Team Benefactors below, who have each pledged up to \$2,500 to double your gifts to support the cause.

With your support, the USA Racquetball family can raise more than \$30,000 for *your* U.S. National Teams!

INAUGURAL TEAM USA CHALLENGE BENEFACTORS

Usher Barnoff • Rick Betts • Steve & Rosanna Czarnecki

Cheryl Kirk & Kit Lawson

Eric & Lydia Muller • Chris Poucher

For the first time under the TEAM USA CHALLENGE, donations will be used to support direct travel costs of U.S. Junior National Team members attending the Junior World Championships!

DONOR LEVELS & GIFTS



\$100 or more will receive a Bag Tag and a **Team USA Towel**

\$250 or more will receive a Bag Tag and a **Team USA Uniform Crew**



\$500 or more will receive a Bag Tag and a **Team USA Pullover**

\$1,000 or more will receive a Bag Tag and a **Team USA Podium Jacket**

2015 U.S. NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Steve Czarnecki | All photos by John Foust

This year's U.S. National Intercollegiate Championships returned to Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, after being held on the east coast in 2014. More than 220 players from 36 colleges and universities competed on the beautiful campus that has become home to multiple national championships over the years.

With the 2014 singles champions of Jose Diaz and Devon Pimentelli not in the field, the competition for top honors and the accompanying invitations to join the U.S. National Team was exciting.

The Women's field included the 2013 champion Kelani Bailey, who had been unable to play the year before. She entered the draw as the second seed behind 2014 semifinalist Elizabeth Simmons. The two top seeds cruised to the finals with relative ease, where Bailey took the title in straight games of 15-5, 15-7. Simmons, along with partner Lindsay Rasmussen, rallied to dig in and capture the doubles title.

Adam Manilla entered the Men's draw as the top seed after a semifinal loss to eventual champion Jose Diaz in 2014. Manilla faced a challenging path to the final, defeating Brad Schopieray in the semis, 15-13 and 15-3. On the other side of the draw, Marco Rojas, competing in the Championship for the first time, made it to the finals by defeating Dylan Reid in the semis. The Manilla vs. Rojas final was likely the best match of the Championship. In the end, Manilla finished on top with a 15-9, 7-15, 11-9 tiebreaker victory.

Manilla doubled up on gold medals by capturing the Men's Doubles title with partner Nick Riffel when they defeated Schopieray and Jacob Matthews 15-8, 15-4.

All of the players and medalists capped the week at an enjoyable player banquet where Collegiate All-Americans were recognized along with team champions. Oregon State University captured an impressive eighth consecutive Overall Team Championship. They also won the Men's Team title alongside the University of Missouri, which took the Women's Team Championship.

Congratulations to all of the medalists, and we look forward to another great time with thrilling competition next year. If you or someone you know is a collegiate racquetball player, encourage them to attend this great Championship ... it's the sport's very own spring break!



2015 National Champions
Kelani Bailey and Adam Manilla

Oregon State with
Head Coach Rob Durbin





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"I love the Pro Penn Green ball. The fast crisp action off my racquet helped me win GOLD Medals at the 2011 Pan American Games and 2012 World Championships. No other brand compares to Penn!"

Paola Longoria

"All the Pro's on the IRT know that the Pro Penn HD ball is second to none. With today's lightweight racquets this is the only ball to play with. Its lightweight design and softer feel offers players of all levels the most comfortable experience on the court, even with shots exploding over 180 mph!"

Rocky Carson

THE FINALS:
Adam Manilla vs.
Marco Rojas

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY JOHN FOUST PHOTOGRAPHY

THE FINALS:
Kelani Bailey vs.
Elizabeth Simmons



2015 U.S. NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

RESULTS

TEAM COMPETITION

Overall	Division I	Division II
Champions:	Oregon State University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Runners Up:	University of Missouri	Rochester Institute of Technology
Third Place:	Brigham Young University	
Men		
Champions:	Oregon State University	Western University of Health Sciences
Runners Up:	Colorado State University-Pueblo	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Third Place:	University of Colorado	Rochester Institute of Technology
Women		
Champions:	University of Missouri	Baldwin Wallace University
Runners Up:	Oregon State University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Third Place:	Brigham Young University	Rochester Institute of Technology

SINGLES

MEN'S SINGLES

Champions	Runners-Up
#1 Gold Adam Manilla	Marco Rojas
#2 Gold Nicholas Riffel	Manolo Sandoval
#3 Gold Kyle Ulliman	Ryan Charbonneau
#4 Gold Sam Reid	Aaron Booker
#5 Gold Alexander DeHart	Erik DeMar
#6 Gold Juan Durazo	Robbie Mills
A Thomas Riganti	Scott Cockrell
B Arthur Mitrano	Stanley Cheung
C/D Mitchell Binger	Zane Baird

WOMEN'S SINGLES

Champions	Runners-Up
Kelani Bailey	Elizabeth Simmons
Madeline Gauch	Adrienne Schneider
Erica Lipski	Becky Spezia
Jordan Giljum	Patricia Billette
Christina Hughes	Stephanie Poutz
Haley Dolezal	Kelli King
Hannah Shnurman	
Jessica Nevins	Kathleen Lu
Natalie Mica	Sierra Roberts

DOUBLES

MEN'S DOUBLES

Champions	Runners-Up
Adam Manilla / Nicholas Riffel	Brad Schopieray / Jacob Matthews
Rick Charbonneau / Ryan Charbonneau	Aaron Booker / Jeremy McGlothlin
Alexander DeHart / Robbie Mills	Erik DeMar / Arthur Mitrano

WOMEN'S DOUBLES

Champions	Runners-Up
Elizabeth Simmons / Lindsay Rasmussen	Rachel Creel / Sarah Lewis
Erica Lipski / Patricia Billette	Adrienne Schneider / Jennifer Craft
Christina Hughes / Haley Dolezal	Jessilee Loucks / Kaylie Bartholomew

- 1 BYU Team with Paul Snyder
- 2 University of Missouri Women
- 3 Baldwin Wallace Women with Head Coach Tim Miller
- 4 University of Colorado Men
- 5 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Men



All photos by John



Daniel De La Rosa

TIER 1 CHAMPION SHOOTS FOR #1

TIME FOR A PROKENNEX HANDOFF?

Story by Eric Mueller | Photos by ReStrungMagazine.com

Marty Hogan. Jason Mannino. Kane Waselenchuk. Daniel De La Rosa? In good company, this 21-year-old from Mexico is on the right track to continue the trend of ProKennex players holding top rankings on the International Racquetball Tour. Michael Martinez, President and CEO of ProKennex, hopes so, after De La Rosa became the newest member of another list: the IRT Tier 1 Champions Club.

"I am very thankful and feel very blessed to have accomplished one of my goals when I did," De La Rosa said after winning the ROLLOUT New Jersey IRT Open, which closed out the first half of the season last December. "I feel that win was the first of many to come, and it holds a special place in my heart."

In order to win his first tour title, he had to beat Jansen Allen in the quarterfinals, #2-ranked Rocky Carson, in the semifinals and #3-ranked Alvaro Beltran in an all-Mexico final. "He showed the desire and the will to win that tournament," Martinez said.

So who is the newest member of the IRT Tier 1 Champions Club, besides being one of the youngest faces on the pro tour?

De La Rosa started playing racquetball at the age of four and competed at his first Mexican Nationals tournament as a six-year-

old. "One of my favorite early racquetball memories has to be my very first Nationals," he said. "I was six years old and won four championships that tournament."

De La Rosa still takes a lot of pride in representing his home country. He won Gold at the Pan American Racquetball Championships in 2011 and 2014, then this past February placed second behind Beltran in both singles and doubles at his country's nationals (Campeonato Nacional Selectivo 2015 in Boca del Rio). He reached the quarterfinals of the Men's Singles at the Pan American Racquetball Championship in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in March, as he helped Mexico qualify for competition at the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto this summer.

"There are no words that come close to being able to express the love I have for representing my country," De La Rosa said.

De La Rosa was 14 years old when he was first scouted by Martinez, who had ventured south of the border to watch the teenager compete in Tijuana, where he exceeded expectations. "I just saw a young, energetic, very aggressive, all offense player that had very good racquet skills," Martinez said. "Pure competitor and he was having a great time on the court, always smiling and having fun. It's a good combo that he displays in his matches."



ProKennex started sponsoring De La Rosa in 2009 and he started playing on the IRT part time at age 16. Just three years later, at 19, he began playing full time on the tour.

De La Rosa began his ascent ranked #19 in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 seasons, then jumped ten positions to finish #9 in 2012-13. He ended last season at #5 and he's currently ranked #4 behind Beltran, Carson and Waselenchuk – with high hopes of continuing his upward, incremental movement in the rankings.

"The future looks pretty bright for young Daniel," Martinez said. "He is doing all the things that he's needed to do to get to where he wants to be so far. Every year there's been progress and that's the measurement you'd like to see." Martinez anticipates the day when there will be an all ProKennex final in a tier one tournament. "It'd be a beautiful scenario if there was a nice handoff from number one (Waselenchuk) to number one (De La Rosa) for ProKennex," he said.

When asked: How does one beat Waselenchuk? De La Rosa teased ... "Wait and see, I'll show you on the court!"



CORRECTION: In the Spring edition, the "Charlie Pratt Makes the Call" article on page 12 was incorrectly attributed to IRT Director of Communications Jen Sinclair Johnson. In fact, the piece was authored by Tim Prigo (very well indeed!), so we wanted to thank him properly and apologize for the mix-up!

Tim Prigo is a lifelong racquetball enthusiast who competed in his first tournament at ten years old in Claremont, California, where he grew up. Since then, Tim has played in many IRT events, ranking among the top 40 at his best. He earned a B.A. in English Literature and Philosophy from Franklin Pierce University in 2009, where he spent many years abroad, traveling and studying. In addition to regularly contributing stories and match recaps for the IRT, Tim is an aspiring poet and sports journalist. He also is the club pro at Lloyd Athletic in Portland, Oregon, where he now resides.

2 GRAND SLAM DECADES of US OPEN Champions

2015	?	?
2014	Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)	Paola Longoria (Mex.)
2013	Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)	Paola Longoria (Mex.)
2012	Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)	Paola Longoria (Mex.)
2011	Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)	Paola Longoria (Mex.)
2010	Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)	Rhonda Rajsich (Calif.)
2009	Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)	Rhonda Rajsich (Calif.)
2008	Kane Waselenchuk (Texas)	Paola Longoria (Mex.)
2007	Rocky Carson (Calif.)	Rhonda Rajsich (Ariz.)
2006	Jason Mannino (Calif.)	Christie Van Hees (Can.)
2005	Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)	Christie Van Hees (Can.)
2004	Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)	Cheryl Gudinas (III.)
2003	Kane Waselenchuk (Can.)	Rhonda Rajsich (Ariz.)
2002	Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)	Cheryl Gudinas (III.)
2001	Cliff Swain (Mass.) #2	Kerri Wachtel (Ohio)
2000	Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)	Christie Van Hees (Canada)
1999	Jason Mannino (Calif.)	Jackie Paraiso (Calif.)
1998	Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)	Jackie Paraiso (Calif.)
1997	Cliff Swain (Mass.)	Michelle Gould (Idaho)
1996	Sudsy Monchik (N.Y.)	Michelle Gould (Idaho)



COAST TO COAST



Frederique Lambert
Photo by John Foust

The 2015 calendar year, and second half of the LPRT season, started off in Ohio at the Mercedes-Benz of Cincinnati Pro-Am. With 21 players in the pro singles draw and 11 teams in the pro doubles draw, it was a great weekend of racquetball for both competitors and fans.

There were several great matches in pro singles but very few surprises, with Susy Acosta's Round of 16 win over Cheryl Gudinas marking the only upset of the tournament. The top four seeds rolled into the semis, where Maria Jose Vargas defeated Rhonda Rajsich in four tough games and Paola Longoria disappointed Samantha Salas in three. Samantha was playing great racquetball to keep the pressure on, but Paola showed why she is the best by staying focused to grind out two close games to end the match. Longoria then went on to defeat Vargas in a straight-game final.

The pro doubles final was by far the best match of the weekend. After splitting the first two games, the top seeded teams were tied at 9-9 in the breaker. Nine rallies later, Longoria/Salas took the win over Rajsich/Vargas.

Thank you to tournament directors Kerri and Chris Wachtel, and to Andy Kulback for hosting another great event. Proceeds from the Mercedes-Benz of Cincinnati Pro-Am were donated to "The Battle Buddy Foundation" [www.tbbf.org].

Tour Stays Hot through the Winter Months

By T. J. Baumbaugh and Andy Kulback

KANSAS

The next stop on the LPRT calendar was Overland Park, Kansas, for the 10th Annual Winter Classic presented by Next Page. Tournament director Mike Wedel ran a superb event that included a few upsets and a few bruises for the LPRT.

The event kicked off Thursday night with a unique exhibition match that had been a year in the making. As part of fundraising efforts for the LPRT scholarship program at last year's Winter Classic, locals Bradly Rogers and Rosco Halsey had challenged Paola Longoria and Samantha Salas to a doubles match. After training for twelve months, the men came out firing and the women quickly realized that they were in for a fight. With about 100 witnesses on hand, the women defeated the men 15-12, 15-14, for a great start to the weekend.

First, some upsets ... on Friday, play opened with a great round of 32's match between Maria Paz Muñoz and Kim Thomas. After close to two hours, Muñoz emerged with a 13-11 tiebreaker win in game five. In the round of 16's, #11 Sofia Rascon upset #6 Cristina Amaya in four games and #10 Veronica Sotomayor defeated #7 Cheryl Gudinas in three.

Then some bruises ... Samantha Salas struggled with #5 Frederique Lambert early in their quarterfinal before Frederique hurt her hip in a fall and could not continue. In the semis, Rhonda Rajsich was ahead two games to one in an exciting match before Maria Jose Vargas was injured and could not continue. Then in the Longoria vs. Rajsich final, Rhonda dove for a ball early in game one and landed badly on her right side. She was slow to get up but continued the match to lose in straight games.

NEW JERSEY

The players had two weeks to bounce back and recover before the next stop, where the New Jersey Open turned out to be one crazy weekend in Warren. First, a snowstorm threatened to delay the start of the event. Then, we had our first final in over four years that did not include either Paola Longoria or Rhonda Rajsich.

The event began on Friday morning with two great tiebreakers and two upsets in the Round of 32. First, #14 Jessica Parrilla needed five games to defeat #19 Maria Renee Rodriguez (-4,5,-7,7,2). Then, #21 Ximena Gonzalez defeated #12 Sheryl Lotts (-6,1,-8,7,0), and finally, #18 Kim Thomas upset #15 Adrienne Haynes (-6,2,6,1).

More upsets in the Round of 16 saw Ximena Gonzalez continue to blow up the bracket by defeating #5 Cristina Amaya (6,6,7). Two more upsets were entered by #11 Sofia Rascon over #6 Cheryl Gudinas (5,7,8) and #10 Susy Acosta over #7 Da'monique Davis (-10,9,7,9).

The top four seeds progressed to the semifinals, where Maria Jose Vargas defeated Rhonda Rajsich in four tough games (4,-2,9,4) and



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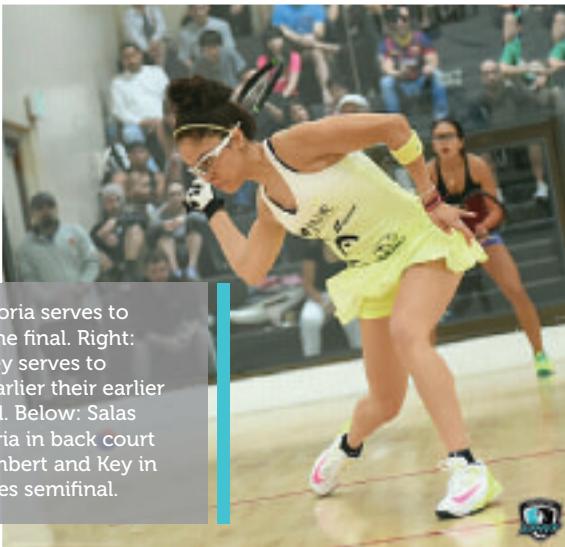
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Here, Longoria serves to Vargas in the final. Right: Michelle Key serves to Longoria earlier in their quarterfinal. Below: Salas and Longoria in back court against Lambert and Key in their doubles semifinal.

Frederique Lambert came out firing for a career-best win. With a nothing-to-lose attitude and aggressive style, Lambert appeared to catch Paola Longoria off guard and unable to establish any kind of rhythm. Great shot-making and retrieving by Lambert combined to defeat the #1 player in the world in four games (7,10,-7,5).

In the final, Lambert repeated her semifinal strategy and captured the first game 11-7. But in game two, Vargas appeared to regain her composure and work hard to take a mid-game lead, then turn the momentum her way. She held control for the remainder of the match to win it -7, 6, 7, 3, for the second Tier 1 win of her young career.

CALIFORNIA

To round out the winter months, we traveled to the sunny west coast where the California/Nevada Racquetball Association and tournament director Nick Irvine hosted an LPRT Tier 1 stop at their State Singles Championships.

The beautiful Los Caballeros Club was the setting for a pretty straightforward draw in which most of the top seeds made it through to the quarterfinals. Two exceptions were mini-upsets in the round of 16 for #10 Susy Acosta over #7 Cheryl Gudinas and #9 Michelle Key over #8 Da'monique Davis.

In the quarters, Paola Longoria, Maria Jose Vargas and Samantha Salas each won in straight games, while #6 Cristina Amaya had to work a little harder to upset #3 Rhonda Rajsich in a tough four-game match.

The top seeds each lost the first game of their respective semifinals, then won in four games to set up another standard matchup between them. In that final, Longoria showed why she is the most dominant player in the women's game, with a low-scoring, straight game defeat of Vargas 6,6,6.

Action photos by Roby Partowich

In pro doubles, seven teams entered a draw where Cristina Amaya continued to be the story of the weekend. She and partner Sofia Rascon upset #4 seeded Acosta/Parrilla and then continued their run to the finals by taking out the #1 seeded team of Rajsich/Vargas. On the other side of the draw, Longoria/Salas had a relatively easy win over the Guatemalan team of Martinez/Rodriguez, then fought through the team of Key/Lambert in a tremendous tiebreaker. The final match was a phenomenal back and forth, with each of the players crushing shots and getting to balls that were supposed to be irretrievable. In the end, Longoria/Salas defeated Amaya/Rascon in two games (12,13).

If you missed any of these great matches LIVE!, you can still check them out in our archives at <http://new.livestream.com/lprtou>. Don't want to miss the latest LPRT action and live streaming matches in the future? Stay in the know by checking out our website at www.lprtou.com and follow us on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lprtou>.



PRO-AM DOUBLES FOR CHARITY IN MINNEAPOLIS

Want to treat yourself to an incredible racquetball experience and support world-renowned children's charities at the same time? At the 2015 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, 32 lucky amateurs will team up with the top stars on the IRT and LPRT for a special kick-off Pro-Am Doubles fundraiser on Wednesday, October 7.

The first 32 players to commit with a \$325 donation will be placed into the draw for an evening of exciting play and hospitality, plus receive an autographed racquet and a souvenir photo from their pro partners. All proceeds will be donated to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and JDRF.

This event has sold out each of the last 19 years, but at press time there were still a handful of spots left. If you're interested, call 719-635-5396, to register, or visit UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com to download a registration form. Either way – act quickly to reserve your place in the lineup!





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Established in 2005, the World Outdoor Racquetball is a parallel universe to the traditional sport played by millions in clubs throughout the country. Rules are familiar, racquets and balls are the same, but the attitude and action take this variation to a whole new level. Hats replace headbands, shirts are optional and sunscreen is one of the most valuable commodities in your bag!

Always competitive, tournaments in the fresh air and bright sunshine take on a party atmosphere and are often incorporated into larger outdoor festivals or events. The speed and power of a game played on the hardest of surfaces - plus the athleticism of players who actually dive onto the concrete to retrieve shots - make WOR events unlike any the traditional indoor player or spectator has ever seen.

WOR is the governing body of outdoor racquetball and hosts events in 24 states. In addition WOR Mexico and WOR Venezuela host events throughout the year. Outdoor is spreading worldwide with WOR & WOR Mexico events hosted in locations from Hawaii to Boston, Cancun to Seattle. Founded in the United States, Outdoor National Championships debuted in 1974 and have grown to include:

WOR Beach Bash 1 Wall National Championships
March • Hollywood, Florida

WOR Championships
July • Huntington Beach, California

WOR Belle Isle Long Wall National Championships
August • Detroit, Michigan

3Wall Ball World Championships
September • Las Vegas, Nevada



By Vic Leibofsky | Top row photos on this and facing page, by Belinda Dettman

This year the Ektelon Beach Bash, presented by Splathead, was elevated to a Level 4 WOR One Wall National Championship and designated the second stop of the prestigious 3WALLBALL Hemborg Ford Cup Series. Drawing players from 23 states, the historic courts at Garfield Street on Hollywood Beach, Florida, once again hosted the mayhem, and this year's level of play went off the charts in all divisions.

The Men's Pro Doubles saw defending champions Richie Miller/Nelson Dieda face Sebastian Franco/Joe Young, the first-ever Florida team to make the finals. Richie and Nelson played tough as nails, but in the end Joe's relentless consistency and Sebastian's overwhelming power were able to take down the champions. Sebastian Franco was the talk of the weekend, with his bazooka serves and amazing overall power on both backhands and forehands, yet with a cool demeanor even in the most critical of rallies. The kid was a pleasure to watch. That said, it forced the ball towards Joe, and that is never a good idea!

The Women's Pro Doubles final was an incredible playoff between returning champs and LPRT stars Rhonda Rajisch/Michelle Key and one wall veterans Anita Maldonato/Jasmine Suarez. What a battle! The crowd was jacked watching Anita dive all over the court and Jasmine take the right shot in every situation. But Rhonda and Michelle would not be denied, and their power and relentless defensive consistency was just enough to win the match 15-14, 15-14. This was one of the most entertaining title bouts of the entire weekend!

Mixed Pro Doubles was another incredible match that had the crowd whipped into a frenzy, watching Nelson Deida/Anita Maldonato take the win over Robert Sostre/Aimee Ruiz in a 11-10 tiebreaker.

The Men's Pro singles final pitted partners Freddy Ramirez and Robert Sostre, with Robert coming out on top. Earlier in the semis, Freddy had to get past Joe Young – no easy task on any court! Robert had faced Sebastian Franco and was

the only player in the entire event who had been able to handle his photon drive serve. No wonder Robert and Freddy are Hall of Famers!

The Men's CPRT 40+ Doubles saw Richie Miller/Rick Kroll come out on top, over the legendary Ruben Gonzales and Tito Montanez.

In the first ever Women's 40+, it was Lisa Sostre/Aimee Ruiz over Eileen





Sebastian Franco dives between opponents Nelson Dieda and Richie Miller and becomes 2015 Men's Pro Doubles Champion, with partner Joe Young.

Think Summer & OUTDOOR RACQUETBALL

By Steve Crandall | VP Sales & Marketing, Ashaway Racket Strings

I don't know if it's the people I've been talking to lately or the fact that, as I first began to write this, it had been snowing steadily here in New England for months, but I keep thinking about outdoor racquetball. I see myself rallying out under a hot sun and a clear blue sky. The courts are right off the beach and a cool ocean breeze is wafting through. Hordes of people are wandering by, music is playing, the scent of hot dogs and mustard is in the air... you get the picture.

Now, I must confess I have not actually played outdoor racquetball. Yet. But the sport is growing by leaps and bounds - and it's definitely on my to-do list. So to prepare myself, I thought I'd talk about the game with a couple of experts, Hall of Famers Cliff Swain and Jacqueline Paraiso.

Both say they love the game and agree that it's surprisingly different from its indoor cousin, despite having the same rules. "Oh, it's crazy different," said many-time World Doubles Champion Jackie. "For one, you don't have all the walls to work with so you really have to be good at moving laterally and controlling the ball. If it hits to the back, you don't have the back wall as a cushion. It's a tougher game for that reason, if you ask me."

Cliff has been very active in outdoor racquetball, winning the 2014 World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) Pro Doubles division with partner Josh Tucker. He says the game is "more straightforward," especially the one wall version invented in 1910, which remains popular in New York City even today. "You can hit the ball hard and up the middle. The best shot on almost all outdoor courts is a ball two to five feet high and right up the middle. That's the worst indoor shot. And the reason outdoor players struggle indoors is because it's easier to pick on the backhand than it is outdoors."

While indoor courts are a standard 20' x 40' contained by sidewalls and ceilings, outdoor courts are more varied. Jackie plays a lot at Marina Park in Huntington Beach, California, which she says, "is three feet longer and six feet wider than a regular court, so you're

covering a lot more ground. But some courts are smaller. Some

have a partial ceiling in the front, but many don't have any. The sidewalls can go back to the service box, or they can angle off before the service box, so when you're used to serving high off the front or side wall, you don't have that opportunity."

Cliff started playing outdoor at the L Street Beach Court in South Boston, which has a long wall of 110 ft. "Having even a partial ceiling makes it very difficult to hit it out of the court. But if the ceiling's not there you can hit it real high and hitting it out 110 feet is no problem. I think that's what makes L Street the best doubles court in the world."

Cliff and Jackie both compared outdoor to tennis and golf, where you not only have the weather to contend with but differing course configurations and different surfaces as well. "You used to see different tennis players excel on different surfaces," said Cliff. "But what's been happening with tennis and outdoor racquetball is that players are learning to play on all surfaces. Before, you saw outdoor players being much better at one wall or long wall, whereas indoor players would all struggle outdoors. Now I think we're starting to see that the best players are getting good on all outdoor surfaces."

The growing popularity of outdoor is another thing both players commented on. "I think it's definitely more appealing for an audience," said Jackie. "They can see more, get more involved, interact with the players more. It's like taking a tennis match and putting it in a racquetball court. You have the same atmosphere and feeling."

Cliff likes the fact that "it's out in the sun, and there are usually lots of people around and music playing. Plus, there are a lot of free public courts. The crowds are bigger at tournaments. I think outdoor helps promote indoor as well. So that's good for everybody."



Michelle Key and Rhonda Rajsich, 2015 Beach Bash Pro Doubles Champions.

"It's just more fun!" Jackie added. "The atmosphere is completely different outdoors. You've got people hanging out in their lawn chairs!"

As for stringing, both agree that control is key to the outdoor game. "Basically you have limited side walls and no back walls," said Jackie. "So you've got to control the game better and keep the ball in the court. If you hit an angled pass shot, you'd better keep it nice and controlled because if you widen that angle just a little bit and it bounces outside that line, then you lose that rally."

Jackie swears by Ashaway's red PowerKill® 17 these days because she can "hit that ball a lot harder and control it at the same time. I string racquets as well," she added, "and I just can't keep the PowerKill in stock. Everybody wants it!" For outdoor she also strings the crosses a bit tighter to improve control.

Cliff also uses Ashaway PowerKill 17 red, strung at precisely 33.5 lbs. to ensure control. "I always get my racquets strung at the same tension at the same time and on the same machine," he said. "Then you don't give away points. People spend hundreds of dollars on racquets and yet they don't realize the importance, not only of having a good string, but of having that level of consistency in the stringing."

I'm going to keep these tips in mind and look for someplace hot and sunny!

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FUN + SUN = ROCKY'S OUTDOOR WAYS

A quick Q&A with the 10-time National Outdoor Singles Champion, by Jeff Oliver

What is your favorite outdoor tournament and why?

Any tournament in Southern California! The tournaments there are not only close to home for me, but the area is where the outdoor game began. Southern California and Orange County also has the best players and competition in the outdoor game!

What do you like most about outdoor?

Being outside! The courts at Newport Beach are my home away from home, and the guys that play there are like brothers to me. I also like bringing my surfboard to the courts and going just a couple hundred yards to the ocean to ride some waves after playing outdoor racquetball.

What are the biggest differences between outdoor and indoor racquetball?

The angles in the two games are different. Also, in the indoor game you have the backwall to capture any rebounds. In the outdoor game you don't have that, so you need to react a bit quicker.

In what ways does playing outdoor benefit your indoor game?

Playing outdoor teaches you to be more aggressive and cut off more balls that indoors you may let go by to take off the back wall. It also helps refine your swing.

What outdoor racquetball accomplishment are you most proud of and why?

I'll always remember my first outdoor national title when I beat Brian Hawkes. I felt like I had little chance in that tournament going up against such great outdoor legends, but I battled through the draw and came out on top. One of the most memorable moments of my entire racquetball career was winning a third outdoor doubles title with my best friend Rob Hoff. It was a very special victory in remembering how far down we were in the final match and that Rob was just coming back from hip surgery."

What would you say about outdoor racquetball to indoor players who have not yet tried the outdoor version of the sport?

The outdoor game is very refreshing and addictive! The first time an indoor player tries the outdoor game, it is like they're playing racquetball for the first time again.

World Outdoor Champion 2014, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2004, and 2002

World Outdoor Doubles Champion 2013, 2010, and 2007

The 3WallBall summer season is already starting with the Hemborg Ford 3WallBall championship series in full swing. As with everything about 3WallBall, this year is bigger and better with more tournaments in more states available for cup points. Plus, more players are competing because, in addition to the PRO cup, an Amateur Cup is being awarded. The season will

conclude on the Las Vegas Strip at the 3WallBall World Championships on September 23-27, 2015. Over 600 players will enjoy great play and live entertainment as they compete for over \$45,000 in cash and prizes in all sports. It will also mark the conclusion of the revamped CPRT season, which is focusing on satellite play.



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Photos by RestringMagazine.com



A large, stylized graphic on the left side of the advertisement features the word "HEAD" in a bold, blocky font. In front of this graphic, several tennis rackets are stacked diagonally. The rackets have various designs, including red, black, and purple frames with green and yellow accents. A black headband with the word "HEAD" on it is positioned in front of the rackets.

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UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships CELEBRATE 20 YEARS

Photo by Ken Fife

Where were you (and your game) in 1996?

Two decades later, many still remember the debut of this Grand Slam and, year after year, have enjoyed seeing it develop into the sport's most important showcase. Today we're thankful that the support of our renewed title sponsor assures that the 2015 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships will celebrate this incredible 20 year landmark in style. You can expect the highest levels of thrill and excitement, each and every day, and here's a preview!

WATCH. The UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Racquetball Championships in Minneapolis is simply the best place in the world to watch pro racquetball. Every top player on the IRT and LPRT will be on hand to guarantee incredible match-ups right from day one qualifiers. Pro match courts are all professionally wired for sound so you'll hear every grunt, groan, and muttered exchange in the heat of battle, and featured pro matches are queued-up on the remarkable, made-for-TV portable stadium court.

At center stage, four walls of optically correct, crystal clear Lucite acrylic combine to create a spectacular show court that is beautiful to behold from any angle. All the surfaces are supported with Lucite connecting "fins" and "L" brackets for a seamless visual experience that makes you feel like you're right inside the service box. Stadium seating accommodates about 1,400 fans, and ticket sales are always brisk.

The Preferred ticket package is the best value, including all 10 exciting sessions for \$139 and, for those who enjoy VIP treatment, a full courtside GOLD BOX offers four plush seats with all-access credentials for \$2,800. Until sold out, a limited number of individual box seats may be purchased for \$800, but you'll need to call 614-890-6073 to check availability.

PLAY. Hundreds of amateur matches will be scheduled at Life Time Fitness Target Center, Life Time Fitness Moore Lake, and Life Time Minneapolis Athletic Club. A fourth overflow club (Life Time Fitness-St. Louis Park) may be used during the first



two days, if needed. Due to huge draws and limited court time, no consolation divisions are played (except in the new HEROES Divisions). Competition will be top-flight in all divisions, pitting challengers from all over the world, and the top four finishers will be awarded "heavy medals" that weigh almost a full pound each!

Every age and skill level is offered in both singles and doubles, along with five Centurion doubles divisions (partner ages must total 100 or more!).

PARTY. After hours, the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is well known for bringing the top pros, everyday players, enthusiasts, and industry leaders together to socialize and enjoy each other's company. The fun starts with the free-admission Pro-Am Doubles for Charity on Wednesday evening, followed by adults-only at the Late Night Players Gathering at the Marriott City Center Lobby Bar on Thursday, and the RacquetWorld Dance Party, hosted by Rocky Carson, at Huberts on Friday. We wrap up with the largest bash of the year — the PARTY WITH THE PROS - at the hot downtown nightclub, The Pourhouse, on Saturday.

Other activities include a special Thursday evening IRF International Reception for all our "out of the country" guests and a weeklong Industry Trade Show in the all-new Players' Hospitality Village, featuring all the top manufacturer displays of the latest and greatest gear.

CELEBRATE. This huge anniversary year coincides with an amazing \$17 million renovation of the Life Time Fitness-Target Center, featuring five-star locker rooms, new restaurant and bar, four-star spa/salon, new swimming pool, and a high-end facelift to all other areas of the club. In short, the event's main nerve center is now one of the finest athletic clubs in the entire world!

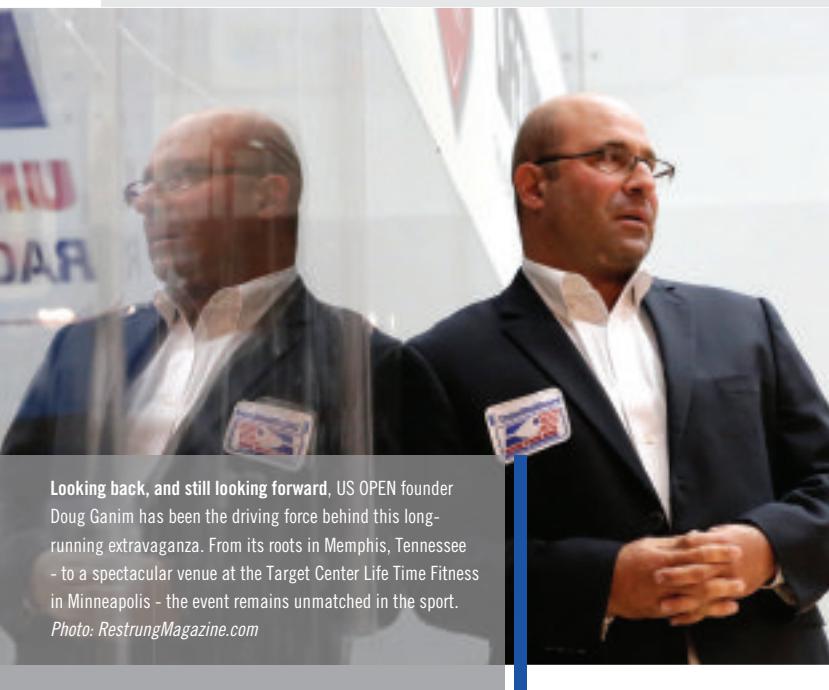
We'll also unveil an all new 8,000 sq.ft., carpeted Players' Village, complete with the Industry Trade Show, Silent Auction for Children's Charities, bar/concessions, US OPEN Souvenir Sales, and a stage with live entertainment.

Also new this year, the US OPEN is now sanctioned by the International Racquetball Federation (IRF), so all players will earn IRF ranking points for each match won. To honor our brave service members, men and women's singles HEROES Divisions will offer competition among current and past military, police, fire, and EMT professionals.

To further commemorate this historic occasion, a limited edition 20th Anniversary embroidered hat will be given to all players, in addition to a micro-fiber tournament shirt, souvenir program, and registration package.

SPECTATE. If there's no way you can commit to the entire tournament as a player, consider taking part as an enthusiastic spectator. Weekend fans are welcome, and will have plenty to get excited about - from Friday's pro singles quarterfinals in the afternoon, pro doubles and RacquetWorld Dance Party at Huberts in the evening - to pro singles semi's, doubles finals and the Grand Gala Party Saturday evening. The pro singles finals on Sunday will round out an incredible three-day sideline experience – so book your hotel and buy tickets NOW!

CYBERVIEW. If you absolutely can't make it to Minneapolis this year, there's still a last resort: UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com will hook you up to the action, right on your computer. You'll find live amateur division results posting, up-to-the-minute pro match results, digital photo galleries, streaming video of select pro matches on the IRT Network, web radio interviews with top pros, plus PPV play-by-play streaming of the quarters, semi's, and finals (sign up at UnitedHealthcareUS OPEN.com). Special thanks to webmaster Steve Kowalski for coordinating this ambitious project.



Looking back, and still looking forward, US OPEN founder Doug Ganim has been the driving force behind this long-running extravaganza. From its roots in Memphis, Tennessee - to a spectacular venue at the Target Center Life Time Fitness in Minneapolis - the event remains unmatched in the sport.

Photo: RestrungMagazine.com

MARVEL. The incredible entertainment offered by the world's top pros – as they seek the sport's highest honor – is always the focal point of the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN. All the tour athletes agree that the prospect of winning this crown brings out 120% of their best effort in every match, in every round. And that's just singles!

Returning to the hardwood this year will be the exhilarating Pro Doubles, delivering plenty of high-flying, fast-paced action and "down to the wire" thrills. Look for more of the same exceptional talent and drive that you've come to expect, from all of the top players, at the US OPEN in 2015!

Looking forward to seeing you there
- Doug Ganim



TOP EIGHT TIPS FOR ATTENDING THE

2015 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN

1 ENTER EARLY! The event is expected to completely sell out this year. At 760 players, we cap the draw and start turning people away. Don't get shut out. Enter today at UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com.

2 ORDER TICKETS NOW! You must have a ticket to view any of the pro matches, and although the Stadium Court seats over 1,400, the event is always a sell-out from the quarters on. No-shows can free up some session tickets "at the door," but it's risky to wait.

3 ENTER TWO OR THREE EVENTS. Court time restrictions (and the large draw) do not allow us to offer consolation divisions, so we strongly recommend that you enter two divisions so that you are guaranteed at least two matches.

4 STAY AT THE HOST HOTELS. Check the entry form for the official list of host hotels. With the event in a downtown setting, area hotels are quite expensive. However, we have negotiated some great deals with our two downtown host hotels (Marriott City Center and the Hyatt Place) and have a large number of rooms blocked for our group.

5 BRING NICE CLOTHES AND YOUR DANCING SHOES! One of the really fun parts of attending the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN is experiencing the many evening social activities offered, especially the Grand Gala – The Party with the Pro's. Racquetball or casual attire is not allowed at this bash, so "dress to impress" will be the rule!

6 LAST FLIGHT OUT ON SUNDAY. Make sure you book the very latest flight you can to head home on Sunday. The Men's Pro final is the last match of the tournament, and you won't want to miss it.

7 FLYING IN—NO RENTAL CAR NEEDED! From the Minneapolis airport you can take the city's clean light rail directly into downtown Minneapolis and right to The Target Center (only 22 minutes). Cost is just \$1.75! Two of the three clubs we are using (including the main club where all the pro matches are played) are downtown and so are the two host hotels. All downtown hotels and clubs are walking distance apart.

8 CONSIDER BUYING A GOLD BOX SEAT FOR THE WEEK (\$800), AND TREAT YOURSELF TO THE ULTIMATE US OPEN EXPERIENCE. Rubbing elbows with all the top pro's in the PRO Gold Lounge and having the most comfortable/best view seat in the house for all the matches is worth the price alone. Throw in the all-you-can-eat food and drink for the week, and it becomes a no-brainer!

Keep these tips in mind when making plans to attend the 2015 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, and you will have the inside track for having a terrific time. Visit UnitedHealthcareUSOPEN.com for expanded details on these (and more!) tips and tricks for enjoying your trip and tournament. See you in Minneapolis!

UnitedHealthcare US OPEN IRT PREVIEW

By Doug Ganim | Photos by RestrungMagazine.com



José Rojas was knocked down, and out, in an early round against Alejandro Landa, losing his round of 16 match after turning an ankle, but still stretching the bout to five games. Later in the season, he and dark-horse contender Jansen Allen went on to win the 2015 National Doubles Championships.

some major league beatings from Kane throughout the past few years, and the scar tissue on his brain is at epic levels. He has a strong chance to reach the finals, but it would take a Herculean effort for him to upset Kane and win the tournament.

Alvaro Beltran – is always a tough bout for anyone, including the top-ranked players. He has reached the Champions Circle twice in T1 events, but this is really an amazingly low total for a player ranked so high for so many years. At the US OPEN, a major issue will be the prospect of a very challenging quarterfinal against, most likely, the tough-as-nails Ben Croft. It will take a lot of effort to get past this match-up, and I wonder how much he'll have left in the

tank for the weekend if he succeeds, especially since he'll also be playing pro doubles. His "ace in the hole" will be the hundreds of Central and South American fans chanting "VAMOS BELTRAN" for a Davis Cup-like atmosphere every time he takes to the court.

The Men's Pro IRT draw in both singles and doubles will undoubtedly deliver another memorable year for fans the world over. More than ever, young stars and wily tour veterans will be gunning for the coveted 20th US OPEN title.

Kane Waselenchuk – The chances of Kane not winning his 11th US OPEN crown are slimmer than slim. His game rises to incredible heights every time he steps foot on the portable court, so pull up a seat for any of his matches to see the game played at a whole new level. He goes undefeated each year but often makes the other top players look downright silly in the process. Of course, an upset is always possible, it's just highly unlikely. The skill and determination he delivers on a racquetball court is truly in a class of its own, and we know you'll enjoy the show!

José Rojas – has stagnated a bit as of this writing and, at this point in his career, many had expected him to be ranked in the top two and making a strong bid for the top spot. In fact, he's the only person to beat Kane in a full match in the last four years. However, his game has leveled out a bit, allowing other young players to pass him in the rankings. His "go for broke" game style is thrilling to watch, since he's not afraid of anyone on tour and likes to bring the heat. There's no question that Jose is still one of the best young players in the world, but time is starting to run out. His many fans have been waiting for a career breakthrough. Is he ready for a Grand Slam title to be that turning point?

Rocky Carson – will have to get through either De La Rosa or Beltran, then Kane to win the title, which is a tall order for sure. Rocky usually plays well at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, however, he has taken



Daniel De La Rosa – Without a doubt, De La Rosa is the fastest-rising young star on the IRT, capturing his first tour stop title this past season. He is the first young player to come along with the kind of racquet skills that would allow him to compete with Kane on a regular basis. Daniel's pure athleticism and willingness to "dive like Croft" after every ball makes him extremely dangerous, and I think he's very likely to be in the semis, and even the finals,

this year. This well-mannered young man, much like Rojas, might be missing just one key ingredient: a half-cup of nastiness. To beat the very top guys you have to make them feel uncomfortable and often that means showing some toughness at critical times and NEVER backing down. We are watching Daniel develop into an elite force right in front of our eyes. His next step will be to "throw down the gloves" and brawl for the US OPEN title.

Ben Croft – Although Ben has only won one IRT Tier 1 event in his career, he is particularly dangerous at the US OPEN. The reason is that his "Play the Villain" routine really isn't an act. He truly hates to lose, and it's obvious in the extra effort he musters compared to all the other players. In addition, the bigger the stage, the more he brings. Throw in a rowdy anti-Croft crowd and his motor shifts into sixth gear. Sure, his head will occasionally explode when things are not going his way, but the truth is, if I only had time to see one match the entire weekend at the US OPEN, I would choose to watch Ben Croft vs. anyone in the quarters or semis. Great racquetball, competitive passion, and true live entertainment are guaranteed!

José Diaz and Marco Rojas – are looking for upsets. Anyone talking about Jose Rojas and Daniel De La Rosa as the best young pro players is missing the boat. Both Diaz and Rojas have crazy mad skills on the court and are capable of breakthrough wins at any time. Both are nice, polite young men, but it's time for them to get a little "mean" on the court to knock off the top-ranked players. Pro racquetball is a tough business, and the portable court at the US OPEN is like the UFC's Octagon cage. Enter at your own risk and don't expect to win unless you are fearless. I predict at least one of these two players will have an upset match victory at this year's US OPEN.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Jansen Allen – Particularly well-known for his right side doubles prowess, don't discount Jansen as a singles player. He can flat roll the ball on both sides of the court and will be a handful for anyone he plays in the round of 16. In fact, he has quietly risen up the rankings to claim a spot among the Top 8 players on tour. Getting away from having to play Kane in the quarters would be a huge help, but that will depend upon his ranking in the weeks just prior to the US OPEN.

Charlie Pratt – Back from the dead, I did not think we would ever see him again at the elite level after dealing with back-to-back serious injuries. However, Pratt has proven me wrong, as he's back in the Top 10. If he is healthy, this guy can play!

IRT Pro Doubles – It's difficult to write an accurate Doubles preview since we often don't know who is playing with whom until a week or two prior to the tourney. However, there are a few teams I expect to be paired up for sure. Last year's champs, Waselenchuk and Croft, are likely to defend their title. Kane and anybody would be an odds-on favorite, but the fact that Croft is one of the best right side players ever makes it easy to predict that the two will stick together this year.

The 2014 runner-up team of Carson and Beltran will likely play together again as well. In fact, this duo defeated Kane and Ben in the finals of the pro doubles division at the Lewis Drug Pro-Am in early 2015 and will be out for revenge at this year's US OPEN.

Lastly, the incredible teamwork of former US National Doubles champs Tony Carson and Jansen Allen is always fun to watch, and they possess the weapons to win the whole thing. Add in all the other young talent on tour, in various pairings, and we have the makings of another thrilling IRT Pro Doubles showdown.

In closing, the men of the IRT are ready to let it fly at the 2015 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN. Get your seat early for the greatest show in sports and ENJOY!



Beltran and Waselenchuk faced off in both of last year's finals, with Beltran capturing silver in each.



Carson, Croft, Beltran & Waselenchuk in the Doubles final.



Finalists Longoria and Vargas have faced off plenty this season.

UnitedHealthcare US OPEN LPRT PREVIEW

By Doug Ganim | Photos by RestringMagazine.com

Let's face it ... The odds-on favorite in singles will be World No.1 Paola Longoria from Mexico who will attempt to win her sixth US OPEN championship in Minneapolis. But unlike prior years, a couple of chinks have recently appeared in the Longoria armor, including losses to Rajsich and Lambert this past season. Although it proves that she's human (and not an unbeatable racquetball machine), we also know that her meticulous preparation and focus will be at peak levels in defending this coveted title. It means a great deal to her, which will make the odds of her losing quite slim.

Paola Longoria – The No.1 player in the world is the defending US OPEN champion as well as the 2013, 2012, 2011, and 2008 title holder. She had another sensational performance during the Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour 2014-15 tour season, finishing at the top by a very wide margin. She also captured the #1 year-end ranking for the sixth time. Unless someone has elevated their game during the off-season, look for Paola to take another step toward racquetball immortality by raising another US OPEN championship trophy. *La Princesa no le será negado otro triunfo.*

Maria Jose Vargas – The women's pro tour has never seen a meteoric rise like the one we've witnessed with Vargas. In just 28 months, she went from #200 in the world to #2 and has been able to defeat veteran Rhonda Rajsich with some regularity as of late. Many believe she is next in line for the LPRT throne and represents the biggest threat to Paola's dominance. However, the road to #1 runs through the US OPEN, so the question remains: will 2015 be the year Maria steps into the bright spotlight on Sunday with her first US OPEN crown? She has yet to solve the Longoria puzzle and usually goes out in straight games against her. Win or lose, fans will want to get good seats to watch one of the most exciting female players to come along in decades!

Rhonda Rajsich – Also in the spotlight will be four-time US OPEN champion Rhonda Rajsich (2003, 2007, 2009, 2010). A former world No.1 player, Rajsich continues to amaze fans with spectacular dives and jaw-dropping shots but, at this writing, she had slipped to the #3 ranking position behind Vargas. One of the older players on tour, Rhonda will have to beat both Vargas and Longoria to win the title, which may prove too great a feat. But she's in amazing shape, which does give her a reasonable shot, and it will be fun to watch this crowd favorite give it her all.



Cristina Amaya made the semifinals in 2014.



Samantha Salas Solis – Samantha slid from No.3 in the world to No.12 after a shoulder injury sidelined her for most of the 2011-2012 season. However, the last two seasons saw her storming back up the rankings and she is currently back in the top eight. Always a fierce competitor, nobody on tour hates to lose more than Samantha. Expect her to leave it all on the court every time she plays.

Cristina Amaya – From Cali, Colombia, this young player is one of the hottest rising stars on the LPRT. She has been able to beat all the top players except for Longoria and even against Paola she has won games. She is starting to get the swagger of a veteran and the question is, will she shock the world and win her first US OPEN?

Frederique Lambert – This Canadian talent has shot up the rankings in the last 12 months and is now known as “The Lion Slayer.” She is the only player other than Rajsich to beat Longoria in the last five years. When she is playing well, she can give anyone on tour all they can handle.

Veronica Sotomayor – She has been working out with the pros from “the 209,” and her game is ready to explode to the next level. With a breakout year last season, she now enjoys a seeding position that allows her some breathing room in the draw. Don’t be surprised to see her giving a top player fits in the quarters.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Aubrey Kirch – Perhaps one of the most talented players on tour from a racquet skills standpoint, Aubrey will be an extremely tough match for one of the top players if she makes the quarters.

Da'monique Davis – Always dangerous in any round, especially after a breakout season in 2014-15. Probably not capable of winning it all, but she’s certainly ready to pull an upset or two.

Susana Acosta-Mendoza – Another top player from Mexico, Susy has recently shown resurgence in her game. This tour veteran has more experience than all of the other Dark Horse players, so don’t be surprised to see her in the quarters.

Michelle Key – This fast-rising star on the LPRT is showing she can play with the best. Her powerful game and athletic skills make her a threat every time she steps out onto the court.

Adrienne Fisher-Haynes – A tour veteran with a big serve and powerful game, her go-for-broke game-style can be problem-

atic for the other players if she is having an “on” day. Just returning from starting a family last season, the question will be, how much time does she have to train and prepare for an event of this calibre?

LPRT Pro Doubles – It’s nearly impossible to predict the pairings for this division, which makes it difficult to preview. The million-dollar question is, “Who will Longoria choose as a partner?” Last year her regular partner, Samantha Solis, was out with an injury so Longoria teamed up with Veronica Sotomayor and won it all. Will they pair up to defend that title, or will it be Longoria and Solis? Either way, it’s tough to bet against Longoria to win the doubles crown again, no matter who is at her side.

With that being said, nothing is more unpredictable than doubles. Teams get hot, momentum plays a huge role, and the format of two games to 15 and tiebreaker to 11 lends itself to more upsets rather than fewer. The Women’s Pro Doubles final last year was one of the best women’s matches in the history of the US OPEN. Look for more fireworks this year!

In closing, the Women’s Tour has more depth and is more exciting than at any time in the last 20 years. It is truly international, with six different countries represented in the Top 8 rankings, and its players are remarkably fit and attractive role models who demonstrate the highest levels of athleticism in racquetball. Make sure to catch as many LPRT matches as you can at the 2015 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN. You won’t be disappointed!

TREAT YOURSELF TO VIP STATUS

If you hurry... a limited number of luxury courtside **GOLD BOXES** remain available for the 20th Anniversary 2015 UnitedHealthcare US OPEN. As a **Gold Box VIP**, you’ll enjoy pro matches from comfortable courtside seating - reserved just for you - plus have unlimited access to the exclusive Pro/GOLD Lounge throughout the event.

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The cost for a full GOLD BOX is \$2,800 and includes four GOLD all-access credentials. Single seats can be purchased for \$800 while supplies last. **Act fast to treat yourself to the ultimate racquetball experience** and reserve your GOLD BOX today – by calling **(614) 890-6073** or browsing UnitedHealthcareUSOPENTickets.com to reserve your spot.



CONTINUING THE Making of a Champion

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

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 Winter and Spring 2015 issues, I discussed the Serve in detail, which is a key element in creating your "championship game."

The issue I am going to discuss now is the "Relocation After the Serve":

Your serve is relatively useless unless you relocate out of the service zone afterward in such a way that you can get back into good center-court position (on or behind the dotted line). Often, players hit a serve, admire it, and remain in the service zone—a major mistake because then they are not ready for the opponent's return of serve. You want to be ready, just like a boxer is ready after he throws a punch in the ring. His fists come back up, ready to protect against his opponent's punch as well as to get ready to throw another punch himself. His hands are never down and relaxed because this would make him vulnerable to getting hit and possibly knocked out.

The same is true in racquetball after your serve. If you don't come back into good center-court position, you are vulnerable to getting passed, making you unable to return your opponent's return of serve (resulting in a side-out) or making you hit a weak return (giving your opponent an offensive opportunity). The last thing you want to do is voluntarily give up the chance to serve because you are not in position.

With this information, let's address the four skill areas needed to help make you a more consistent player, a must in developing your championship game.

1-RACQUETBALL SKILLS

The key to relocating after you serve is your footwork and body position. Whether you hit a drive serve or a lob serve, you want to get back into good center court position quickly and efficiently. You want to practice the proper footwork and body positions for relocating after you serve without a ball first, especially off the Z and wrap serves. Once you start to feel comfortable with the proper footwork and body position without a ball, serve and then relocate to good center-court position with a ball.

Rocky, Jason, and Paola as well as the rest of my championship team do this to make sure they are back in good center-court position. This will pay big dividends for them to play at the top of their games.

2-MENTAL SKILLS

Guided imagery is a condensed version of visualization. Guided imagery is when you tell your mind to create a picture of what you want instead of words, in this case, relocating after the serve. Since athletes perform best from visual cues rather than auditory cues, guided imagery is a great shortcut to success.

In guided imagery, close your eyes and instantly create an image on the movie screen of your mind, six inches in front of your forehead. It is like a 5x7 photo of what you want to happen next and how you want to perform. Guided imagery is a mental flash or a visual reminder of what you want to happen next. Desire it, see it, feel it, hit it.

3-FITNESS SKILLS

Power is speed multiplied by force. In other words, how quickly and with what force can you move, especially when "relocating after the serve"? In sports we think of explosive when we think of power. How quickly can you act, react, or move with definite force, thus getting back into good center-court position after the serve.

Paola, Rocky, and Jason have fitness trainers who work with them on a regular basis and focus on developing their power in their training routines.

4-NUTRITION SKILLS

Post-Game Nutrition should occur 90 minutes after your match. Always eat a protein/carbohydrate meal. The amino acids are used to repair your broken-down tissue and cells, and the carbohydrates are used to replace your muscle glycogen stores from your match. Do not replace a good meal with beer and popcorn.

End your day right and eat, but remember to eat the right foods – a key to your championship game.

Jason, Paola, and Rocky all know how to enjoy themselves, but it's about making better choices, and that is a way of life for them.

For more details on the concepts discussed in this article, refer to my book, "Championship Racquetball."

Hope to see you at one of my camps for live personal instruction. Or, buy my video, "Building Your Racquetball Dream House," or my book, "Championship Racquetball," if you can't make a camp at this time.

www.FranDavisRacquetball.com

Championship Racquetball

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- Learn to vary serve-deception
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- Improve shot selection/court position
- Game plans/Strategies a must
- Be aggressive on the return of serve
- Perfect practice makes perfect -

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Fran Davis - A Healthy Racquet, Inc.

1037 NE 65th St. #343

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Phone: 206-522-FRAN (3726)

Fax: 206-260-7909

Taylor Knoth
Jr. World Champion

Jason Mannino
#1 Pro Player 2003

Rocky Carson
#1 Pro Player 2008

Sharon Jackson
Jr. Nat'l Champion

Paola Langoria
2X #1 Pro Player

Sudsy Monchik
6X #1 Pro Player

Fran's Credentials

- 25+ Years Camp Experience
- Woman of the Year 2009
- 2004 Hall of Fame
- U. S. National Team Coach 1989-1996, 2002
- Pan American/World Championship Coach
- USOC National Coach of the Year 1997
- Coaches Rocky Carson, Paola Longoria, Taylor Knoth, Sharon Jackson
- Coached Legends Jason Mannino and Sudsy Monchik
- USAR-IP Master Professional

Jason's Credentials

- #1 IRT Professional Player 2003
- 2X U.S. Open Champion
- IRT Most Improved Player 1998
- IRT Rookie of the Year 1996
- International Racquetball Tour President

Camp Schedule:

Weekend Camps 2015

June 5-7	Millersville, MD
June 19-21	San Francisco, CA
August 28-30	San Antonio, TX
November 6-8	Chicago, IL
TBA	Houston/Dallas, TX
TBA	Phoenix/Tucson, AZ
TBA	Los Angeles, CA

Weekend Camps 2016

January 15-17	Sarasota, FL
January 29-31	Seattle, WA
March 11-13	Findlay, OH
April TBA	Las Vegas, NV

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ARUBA CAMP -	December 3-10, 2015
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CANCUN CAMP - TBA	(Mexico...Intermediate to Advanced Camp)
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Presented by
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THE SERVICE MOTION BEGINS WITH ANY Continuous Movement... ... that results in the serve.

So, can a Z-serve ever be a screen?

photo by Geoff Thomson



Several recent emails asked questions about whether Z-serves can ever be screen serves. Each time I responded that they certainly could and referred the questioner to the rule itself – Rule 3.9(i). If the receiver is properly positioned to receive the serve, then if the ball (1) passes “close” to the server (or his partner in doubles) and (2) that “closeness” impairs the receiver, then that is a screen serve.

However, the term “close” is not specified. Generally, there is some agreement that it is “something less than the length of one’s racquet,” i.e. less than 22 inches. So, if a serve passes “close,” then one must assess whether the receiver was impaired by that “closeness.” Here’s how I decide that: if the receiver holds up his return, then he was clearly impaired, and I call that a “screen serve.” But if the receiver plays the ball normally, then there was no impairment and no screen serve. Finally, if the receiver’s body language shows some sign of hesitation but then adjusts rapidly, I will still call that a screen serve, too, because I consider that to be “impairment” that meets the rule’s criteria.

There are many kinds of Z-serves. The server can hit the Z-serve with a forehand or backhand. He can hit it from anywhere along the 20-foot-long service line. He can also hit it hard or soft and any speed in between. The serve can be hit to any height or distance from the front wall corner. The server can also make the served ball pass either behind him or in front of him on its way to the back court.

As the ball travels its “Z” path to the rear court, it usually starts in open view, but after contacting the front corner, it will pass either in front of or behind the server, be in clear view again as it heads to a side wall, and then tend to bounce straight across the court. Almost every Z-serve passes “close” to the server, but also the extended time that the ball is in rather open view brings into question whether the Z-serve’s “closeness” should be a problem at all. Moreover, the element of surprise (rather than “closeness”) also may affect the receiver’s ability to return the serve.

So, my answer about Z-serves being called a screen serve is that if the referee thinks the ball passed “close,” then call the screen serve, but only if the receiver holds up or displays any hesitation and no other factor, like surprise, was present.

Robbie R. asked: Can you clear up the receiving line rule? Can a player stand there and wait for the ball to bounce or cross the line so they can hit it? A lot of players will move to the line simultaneously as the ball is moving into or past the safety zone and it looks like they are waiting for the ball at the line.

I answered: The “receiving line” should be viewed as defining an invisible force field (like a wall) that extends from the line that’s drawn on the floor all the way up to the ceiling. The “wall” prevents the receiver and his partner from crossing that line at all until one of two things happen. The first is the ball bouncing on the floor in front of that line, and the other is the ball passing through that invisible wall. Only then can the receiver (or his partner) go into that area. Going through that wall before one of those two things happen results in the server winning a point. This is addressed in Rule 3.11(a).

Ivan V. asked: A small question: can you ask for a time-out between serves, between the first and the second serves?

I replied: Yes, you can. In fact, a time-out can be called from the moment the prior rally ends (once acknowledged by the referee) until the server begins his next service motion (which is defined as any continuous movement that results in the serve). So, even after the score or “second serve” has been called by the referee -- as long as the server has not yet begun his service motion -- a time-out can be called by either player.

Jonathon W. asked: A friend of mine comes from a tennis background. He likes to do an overhand-type serve similar to a tennis serve. He just tosses the ball high, lets it bounce, and then smashes it. The amount of power generated by this serve causes the ball to reach mid-court once it hits the ground and then rebounds off the back wall. I was wondering if this type of serve is legal?

I responded: The way you described it, it sure sounds like that is a legal serve, but I hasten to note that it really isn’t a very “controllable” serve and often produces a set-up for the receiver. Refer to the latest rulebook, and I will finish by saying that each and every serve must fully comply with each of the things specified in Rules 3.2 through 3.6.

DO YOU HAVE A RULES/REFEREEING QUESTION?

Be sure to email it to me at rules@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 where you can find, review, and/or download them – especially to your Smartphone – at: teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/How-To-Play/Rules.



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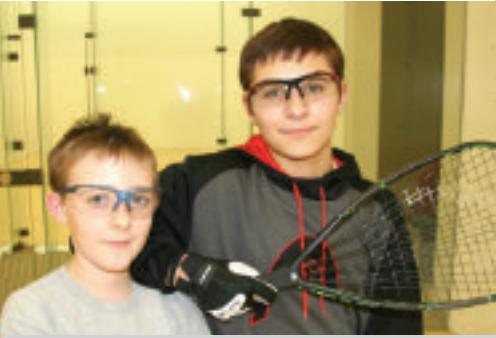
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Compiled by Bob Bodor

PHOTO BY JOHN WIESE



MINNESOTA JUNIOR OWEN FORSYTHE INTERVIEWS ELLIS SYKE

Q: What's your most memorable win?

A: I think it would be playing Jon Salitros for the first time ever and he was considered one of the best people in the Men's B singles division and I beat him pretty decently. Everyone was surprised, including me, so that sort of showed me that I had a pretty good future in the sport.

Q: What are your goals this year?

A: I want to win, hopefully, the B state title, but I also want to win an A singles match.

Q: Is it intimidating playing against adults all the time?

A: Not really. It's almost a benefit to me, because they think I'm not going to be very skilled because I'm just a kid and I get to play them and surprise them, so I wouldn't say it's intimidating.

Q: Do you listen to music before matches and if so what type?

A: No I don't listen to music. One tournament I did, I think it was the US Open but when I do, I listen to 80's rock music.

Q: How has the community around you changed your game?

A: Everyone in the racquetball community is so nice and they're all so supportive and help coach you. Everyone's just so willing to help each other out even if they don't know you.

Q: Who is your role model or hero?

A: My beautiful mother, Tricia Syke. In real life she is my role model or hero because she's a hard worker and she gives way more than she receives.

Q: What opportunities have you had to travel with racquetball?

A: I have traveled all over the state of Minnesota for tournaments, but then I've gone to Denver, Colorado and I'll be going to Stockton, California for the Junior Nationals.

Q: What's your most memorable win?

A: I think it would be playing Jon Salitros for the first time ever and he was considered one of the best people in the Men's B singles division and I beat him pretty decently. Everyone was surprised, including me, so that sort of showed me that I had a pretty good future in the sport.



Check out the MISSOURI High School Racquetball Association logo, designed by Rollout.

Does your State Organization have a logo? Please share it with USA Racquetball, we'd love to see what you've got.

In St. Louis, Vetta Sports Concord and Dan Whitley kicked off their 13th annual summer racquetball camp for 8-12 graders in early June. Over 80 campers will be on the courts twice a week for two hours through the end of July working with former MOHSRA alumni and fitness instructors. The camp is designed for players at all levels, and Whitley's philosophy is: "Goal #1 is to have fun. Lots of the kids do the camp every year that they are in high school, and it's neat to see their reason for attending evolve as they become more interested in becoming a complete player versus a recreational player."

Between the strong school-year High School League and summer opportunities like this, it is easy to see why St. Louis (along with Portland) is a leader in Junior development.

Whitley definitely sees a Summer Racquetball Camp as a vehicle to start a high school league in your city. "If you offered a similar clinic at any club it would be a magnet to the kids who might have the most interest to help start a high school program at their school." Well done, Dan!



443 attended the 2015 MOHSRA Annual Awards Ceremony. Sportsmanship Award recipients Nick Shylanski, Ethan Slutsky, Corinne Klump, Sydney Ferguson and Cayla Rhode. Photo by Melissa LaMonica.

**HAVE
NEWS?**

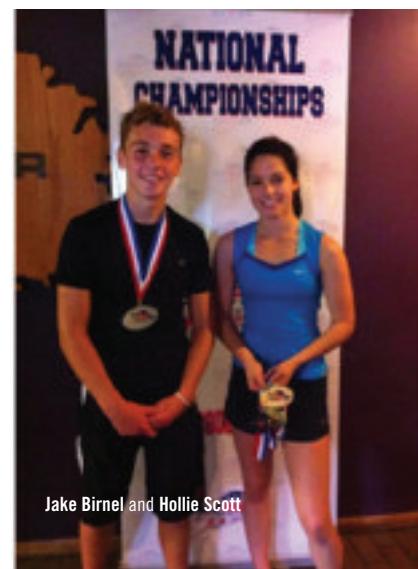
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FOR A FUTURE ISSUE.

The **WASHINGTON** Junior Racquetball Association encourages junior programs and lessons in athletic clubs by providing equipment and funding entry fees and travel expenses for all state players, and their efforts are paying off. Wanda Collins reports, "Over 100 junior players have been helped through the WJRA in one way or another. Some of them have introduced the sport to their parents as well! Instructors across the state started small: two or three kids on the court, which led to three or four more, and on and on. They gain the confidence to join in leagues and participate in junior divisions at tournaments."

In fact, juniors dominated the Open Divisions at the Junior/Adult State Championship in Seattle. Jake Birnel, 17, is a four-time Junior National Team member and took his state win without dropping a single game. He has attended Junior Nationals each year since he was eight, "I will absolutely keep playing racquetball when I finish high school. I can't wait to see how far I can progress in the sport that I love."

In Women's Open, 16 year-old Hollie Scott also went undefeated to claim the title. She is a two-time Junior National Team Member and has an equally positive outlook about her plans after high school. "Racquetball is a huge part of my life and I will never give it up."

Thanks to all of the dedicated Junior mentors in Washington, like Rich Carver in Spokane, Cheyenne Hayes in Olympia, Wanda Collins in Bellingham, and Robert Allen in Everett.



Jake Birnel and Hollie Scott

THE SOUTHERN COLLEGIATE RACQUETBALL CONFERENCE will have a new commissioner when the 2015/2016 season starts back up in the Fall. Ty Stolp has stepped down after four years of leadership and Cameron Boykin will take over. Said Boykin, "The potential for growth lies in our ability to help young clubs to get organized and become self sufficient. We have to do our own outreach, not just wait for players to find us. We want to be first thing college students in our region see when they search for collegiate racquetball."

The SCRC was awarded the Commissioner's Cup at the 2015 National Intercollegiate Championships led by strong performances by UT-Austin and Texas A&M teams. Even with a limited number of teams currently in the conference, the talent is exceptional. While Boykin has long-term goals, he's excited to see improvement beginning with the 2015/2016 season.

"My short term goals for the SCRC are to increase the level of student leadership in the program and to increase attendance at all meets. This kind of involvement is a great learning opportunity for the students, and chances like that in my college club helped me gain skills applicable to daily life. That will also leave more bandwidth for adult leadership to focus on the growth of the organization by recruiting and growing new clubs."



Collegiate Council Chairman **Shane Wood** awards the 2015 SCRC Commissioner's Cup to the president of the University of Texas club, **Alex Howard**, and **Katie Nieswiadomy** of Texas A&M at the 2015 National Collegiate Championships. Photo by Bob Bodor.

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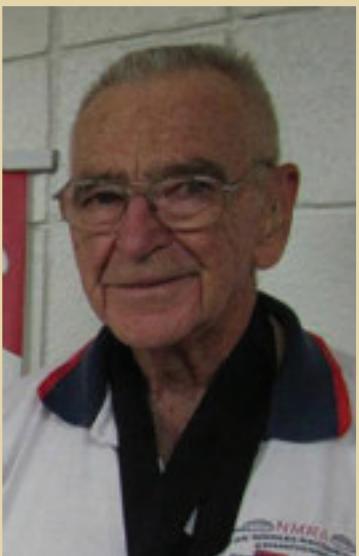
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Dick Kincade

CALIFORNIA ... At the LPRT State Singles Championships hosted by Los Caballeros in Fountain Valley, California, top-seeded Rick Betts won the Men's 60+ Open against #2 seed Nick Nikkhoo, winning in a tiebreaker, 11-5. In the Women's Open, Carla Muñoz defeated Gabriela Martinez in a dramatic 11-10 tiebreaker.

COLORADO ... recently welcomed George Tellez to its Board of Directors, just in time for an exciting lineup of major events. His prior service on the California/Nevada Board of Directors adds to an already-strong state organization that pulled together to coordinate fabulous volunteer support at the 2015 National Singles Championships. This dedicated group served a variety of roles during the Championship and once again showed the power of teamwork. Thank you ,CRA!

An icon in southern Colorado racquetball for over 35 years, Dick Kincade passed away at his home in Divide on February 12, at the age of 89. The retired naval aviator had been introduced to the game in 1974 and then spent the remainder of his lifetime involved in the sport in some way, shape, or form. He was an avid player at the Buffalo Athletic Club in New York, then opened the Sports Courts of Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1976. In 1980, the family retired to the Colorado Springs area, where Dick briefly headed up another club in Woodland Park. He was a National Masters Champion in singles and doubles, multiple times over, and was inducted to the National Masters Racquetball Association (NMRA) Hall of Fame in 2008. His final competition was the 2014 Men of October event in Sun City, Arizona. Photo courtesy NMRA.

FLORIDA ... invites you to register for July's Port St. Lucie Open, one of the best mid-summer indoor tournaments in the country. Earlier this spring, a packed field of over 200 players competed at the 2015 Ektelon Beach Bash presented by Splathead at Garfield Street Courts in Hollywood.

GEORGIA ... At the 2015 State Singles Championship held at Emory University in Atlanta, Marietta's Kelly Doyle dominated the Women's C Division. The Men's Open saw an equally impressive performance by Matt Fontana, who won every game of his bracket before defeating Maurice Miller in a competitive 15-9, 15-8 final.

IOWA ... The IRA Board of Directors recently recognized three of its retiring members: Vice President Denny Baysinger, Secretary Don McCormick, and Activities Director Brian White, who were all highly dedicated throughout their terms. The IRA also shared some creative promotions they used to help fund their Junior Team's trip to Stockton, by offering corporate sponsorship benefits that included naming rights at State Singles, logos on tournament shirts throughout the season, newsletter and social media placements, published logos and signage, entries, lessons and website promotions on IowaRacquetball.org.

MARYLAND/WASHINGTON ... Board member Jamal Harris recently helped put together an event to help benefit Parkinson's disease patients. The event was a clinic that taught a modified version of the game to patients and caregivers. It's a great partnership and we look forward to working with it again. We are already working on next fall, when we plan to open the season with a Player Appreciation Event, a fun weekend with low to no registration fee, a variety of events and a fun, relaxed atmosphere. We look forward to reporting back on it.

MICHIGAN ... The outdoor season kicks into gear with a series of exciting tournaments at Belle Island and St. Clair Shores. Some of the best events in the nation are scheduled at Belle Isle in June and July, capped by the Belle Isle Long Wall Racquetball Championships, August 15-16. And we'll have the 11th Annual Can You Stand the Heat? championships in St Clair Shores. Earlier in June, players from Michigan and surrounding states competed in the Meijer State Games of Michigan for an opportunity to qualify for the State Games of America being held in Grand Rapids in 2017.

NEW YORK ... Beth Shea won the State Singles Championship for the fourth time in the past six years and Agustin Tristan took the Men's division. Tristan, a former world junior and NCAA Champion just had his fifth surgery yet easily won his first tourney when he returned to the circuit. What an inspiration to those who have faced injuries, combined with busy careers, and who keep on competing – congratulations!



2015 New York Champions Agustin Tristan and Beth Shea. Photo by Josh Shea.



Cap and Mike Hiles. Photo by Bruce Adams.



NMRA IN KANSAS ... After an eight-year hiatus, the Athletic Club of Overland Park welcomed the National Masters Racquetball Association for its annual National Championship in March. Even Mother Nature supported the return of this truly outstanding and unique event by re-routing all major Midwest storms and delivering excellent weather every day.

Many 2007 players once again claimed home-court advantage, along with 23 first-timers seeking to match skills with NMRA regulars. As always, every round-robin division was highly competitive, many matches were won by a single point, and Racquet Warriors 45-90 years-young enjoyed superb daily hospitality between matches.

The Friday night banquet featured an outstanding program of awards, videos, photo slideshows, memorial tributes, tournament highlights, comedic moments and sponsor recognitions to thank NES Associates of Virginia and Rick Betts of California. NMRA members also conducted a fundraiser to benefit local youth, raising over \$1500 for Kansas Junior Racquetball and presenting those proceeds to recently-appointed USA Racquetball Board Member Mike Wedel.

Traditionally the NMRA schedules time to observe the passing of members since the last tournament, and the group was honored with a special appearance by Cap Hiles, who offered a large donation in the name of NMRA Hall of Famer Dick Kincade [1925-2015].

Membership is not required of any first-time NMRA player (although we hope you'll join!); however, all players must be an active member of USA Racquetball in order to compete. In addition to great competition, family members and guests are welcome to enjoy daily hospitality and a Friday night banquet that is legendary on the tournament circuit. So even if you're no longer interested in tournament play, think about supporting the future of masters' racquetball by joining the NMRA.

Next on the docket is the NMRA International Championship in Denver, Colorado, July 22-25, offering singles, doubles, and mixed doubles competition. The NMRA Doubles Championship in Fullerton, California, will finish out the season on the west coast, December 3-5. Find additional tournament and winner photos and video on Youtube.com, as well as specific tournament details and entry information at www.nmra.info.



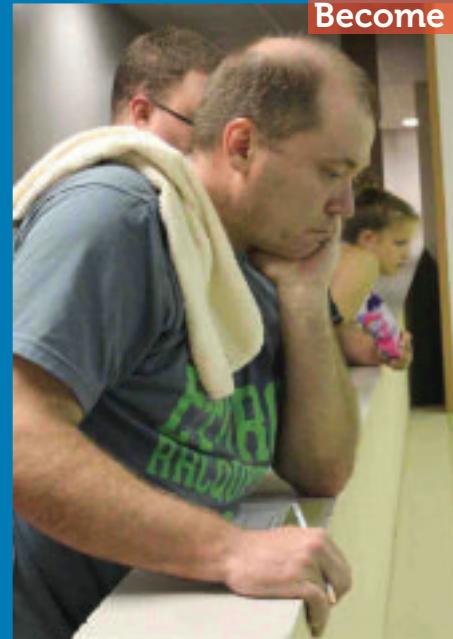
OREGON ... Earlier this Spring, the Multnomah Athletic Club in Portland hosted a one-day memorial tournament honoring U.S. Army Special Forces Specialist John Pelham. The 22 year-old serviceman was killed last February while serving in Afghanistan as part of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group.

He was a well-known and liked racquetball fanatic, who played mostly at LA Fitness in Beaverton, Oregon. His last Facebook post was, "I can't wait to play racquetball again."

Photo courtesy the Pelham Family

ARE YOU UP TO THE TEST?

Become a Certified Referee



Racquetball is one of the few sports that requires its own athletes to referee match play, and a shortage of competent officials makes that a challenge at sanctioned tournaments. Are you up to the test?

Anyone can keep score, but do you really know the rules? Become an expert in three easy steps with USA Racquetball's online Referee Certification program. It's FREE to start, then only \$10 for added testing, assessment, video tutorials and expert guidance through advanced levels.

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TORN

*Which would
you rather be... a
professional athlete
or an entertainer?
Andy Gross has
done both.*

INTERVIEW BY BOB BODOR
PHOTOS COURTESY ANDY GROSS

Growing up in St. Louis in

the late 1970's, Andy Gross lived in close proximity to many of the early legends of the sport. Racquetball was a natural fit for the entire Gross family, from supportive parents Joan and Marshall, to highly-talented siblings David and Sherry. David was on the pro circuit and introduced Andy to the sport; their sister Sherry was equally skilled. All three rode the explosive wave of racquetball's popularity, right at their home club, the Jewish Community Center.

"The camaraderie was unique. Every day, we couldn't wait to get to the J after school. There was only one court dedicated to kids, so parents would set their alarm for 5:55 am to get a reservation. It was that much in demand."

When you grow up watching, and playing, legends like Marty Hogan, Jerry Hilecher, Steve Serot, Ben Koltun, Doug Cohen, and Jerry Zuckerman, the magic of the sport was impossible to ignore. "Marty came to the court one time and hit the ball so hard, the sound he made was incredible, it was amazing." Small moments like that instantly hooked the young Andy Gross. "Steve Serot came to the top of the court and threw down a racquet and a bag. That was the greatest moment ever, [I] got a brand new racquet only the very best had access to. We had the best there were right in St Louis."

Early on, Gross' brother David recognized one of the advantages of Andy's youth. "He had to push himself a little harder because he was always around older and better players. He developed one of the best serves in the sport and, being a lefty, it was even more difficult to return." He started attending and winning Junior Championships and even had personal training sessions with the San Diego crew (like Charlie Brumfield and a relocat-ed Marty Hogan). At just 11 years old, Gross found himself learning from and playing against the legends of the sport.

Gross competed for Parkridge Central High School (when they allowed it; being a pro player was a point of contention in some circles) before qualifying for the professional tour in 1984, at the age of 15. It made him one of the youngest players to ever qualify for the tour and, after advancing to the round of 16, he was on his way to an eight-year run on the pro circuit.

The relationships he developed in St. Louis stayed with him as his prowess grew, although not always in the way he expected. Hogan once pulled him over in the midst of a pro match and told him "Listen, I'm starving. Aim low, run hard and let's get out of here" ... not exactly the advice he'd anticipated.

At the same time he was making a living on the courts, Gross never forgot his talent as an entertainer, which often came in handy on the road. Whether throwing his voice to make an unknowing shuttle driver think there was someone in the trunk, or confusing a youngster in a pet shop through a talking parakeet, he always found a way to get a laugh from his fellow pros.

Moving to California in 1992, he continued to compete at up to 20 events each year while being introduced to Hollywood's racquetball scene, "I used to play once a week with Ryan O'Neal and Farrah Fawcett on the court in their house. Wilt Chamberlin was a player, tons of celebrities and personalities played."

Devastated by the decline in the sport's popularity, "I will never forget reading 'ins and outs' in some magazine and racquetball was on the 'out' list," Gross began seriously considering a career change. "One of the hardest things I have ever done is walk away from the sport because, from the time I was seven years old, I thought racquetball was going to be my life. It was good to me, but I had to make a change."

It's not lost on Gross that he chose two unlikely careers, as he offered, tongue-in-cheek, "Once I left racquetball, it's a natural progression ... you become a ventriloquist! I picked two of the strangest careers ever."

Fortunately for Gross, he's always been an entertainer. "I saw the movie *Magic* as a kid and was hooked." His skills became useful in many ways. "I used to page

myself out of class in school." His brother also remembers, "He was a very funny and outgoing kid, but we thought magic was just a phase." Now making a good living performing up to 150 shows a year, Gross' "phase" has turned into a remarkable career.

So how does someone transition from being an athlete at the highest level of racquetball to performing on stage in front of thousands? "I went to open mic nights at places like the Comedy Store and Laugh Factory in Hollywood and before long was a regular at comedy clubs. This led to corporate shows, cruise tours, and stand-up clubs around the country."

Later, Gross came up with the character, Split Man which received over 30 million views on YouTube in just 18 months, to date. "I got a call one day from CNN. I had no idea what was going on, but it had a million hits overnight. It was almost surreal how big it got. The reactions were incredible." The viral video also caught the attention of Ellen, who included it in a special Halloween feature in 2013.

Gross, who owns one of the largest vintage ventriloquist dummy collections in the country, recently released his newest video, Split Man on the Elevator. He remains incredibly passionate about his racquetball history, but is clearly thrilled to have found a way to follow his other passion. "It feels like I'm winning first place every time I do a show - but yet, I'm not diving, bleeding from the hips, or sore the next day."

To this day, Gross is clear on what the sport gave him. "Racquetball made me what I am, it's why I'm successful today. Every day I found myself around good people. All we learned was doing the right thing and how to win. I saw what work ethic and discipline looks like, and that 90% of winning is mental. Hilecher wasn't the most physically talented player, but his desire and intelligence drove him to become one of the best. I was around winners. To me, it's the greatest sport ever. I'm amazed how many people come up after my shows and want to talk racquetball."

He is still involved in the sport, playing regularly at the Bay Club in Canoga Park and even attended a recent IRT final featuring Rocky Carson and Kane Wase-

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DAVID & ANDY GROSS:
GROWING OLDER—AND BETTER

SOUNDS OF DEAF RACQUETBALL
MAGIC OVERHEAD SHOTS
UPPER BODY WORKOUTS FOR WOMEN



lenchuk. "Unbelievable!" He is also very impressed with the level of play on the women's side, "incredible athletes, amazing to see how far the sport has come."

Gross married another St. Louis native, April Bartlett, and resides in Southern California with their four children, Audrey Lynn, model Riley Jane, model and actress Morgan Lily, and actor Jordan David. Among his talented offspring, all have inherited the entertaining gene, including his oldest daughter Lily, who has already appeared in major motion pictures like 2012 and X Men. She summed up Gross' unique journey, when a teacher asked about her father's career as a ventriloquist. Her response, "It could have been worse, he could have been a mime."

Andy Gross is Racquetball.
Together, We are Racquetball.



US TEAM SUCCESS

PARC Qualifies Athletes for Toronto

Seven players and three staff members traveled to Santo Domingo to represent the U.S. at the annual Pan American Racquetball Confederation Championships during Easter week.

Although not to be confused with the quadrennial Pan American Games – which take place only in the year preceding the Summer Olympic Games – the 2015 PARC event held added importance as a qualifier to July's Pan Am Games in Toronto.

Delegates and coaches represented 16 countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, United States, and Venezuela.

Actually two tournaments in one, the event certainly offered its winners well-earned medals and bragging rights, but also qualified them for the most prestigious sporting event for racquetball in the western hemisphere. Men and women competed in singles and doubles, and their combined results decided how many players of each gender their country would send to Toronto's Pan Am Games.

The format was three days of initial round robin competition to determine seeding of the main draw, which was then played out over three days in the second week. Between the two, Coach Dave Ellis observed: "Team USA had nearly 100% success in the pool play, winning 14 out of 16 matches. The two losses did negatively affect our seeding. Nevertheless, all the players are eager and ready to continue on and secure a positive qualification result for the Pan American Games in July."



Down to the wire on Friday

Coach Ellis commented, "What a day for Team USA! Jake and Jose came through big time as both logged victories over the two Bolivians. The day before, Conrado Moscoso and Carlos Keller had defeated the formidable Mexican pair of Daniel De La Rosa and Alvaro Beltran. With this development, Team USA assured itself of both a Gold and Silver medal. Team USA finished first in the men's competition and qualify for four places at the upcoming Pan American Games in July."

Ellis continued, "Our delegation is unified and mutually supportive. It is the norm, when Team USA players are on the court, for them to look out and see a majority, if not all, of their teammates. These tournaments are special; the delegation will always remember our time together in Santo Domingo."

A really good day on Saturday

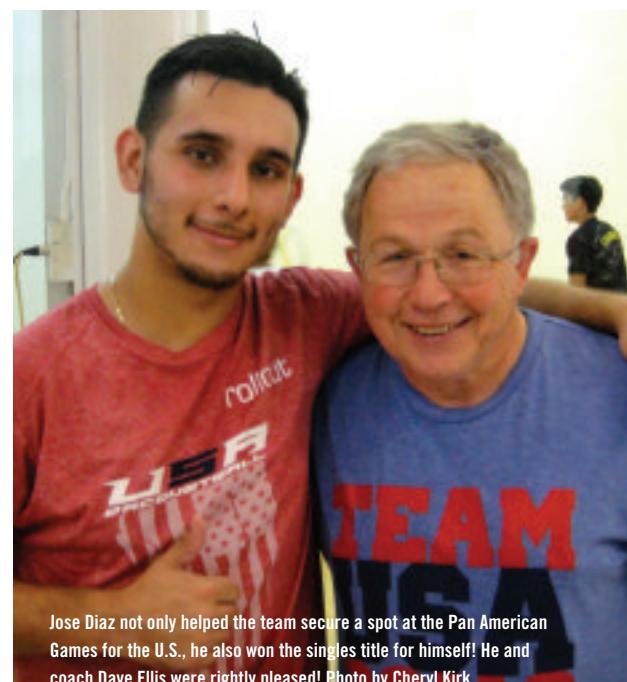
Rhonda Rajsich def. Maria Paz Muñoz (Ecuador), 15-8, 15-12
 Da'monique Davis def. Maria Cespedes (Dominican Republic), 15-14, 8-15, 11-3
 Jose Diaz def. Jake Bredenbeck, 15-7, 15-5
 Rhonda Rajsich/Sheryl Lotts def. Maria Paz Muñoz/Veronica Sotomayor (Ecuador), 5-15, 15-10, 11-3
 Bobby Horn/Anthony Herrera def. Daniel Maggi/Shai Manzuri (Argentina), 15-7, 7-15, 11-1

Summary

Team USA finished #1 in the men's overall team and #2 for the overall combined team competition. Relative to Pan American Games eligibility rules, the U.S. qualified for four men's spots and two women's. The US women finished high enough to receive a third spot, since a couple of the women's teams that finished higher did not use all of their earned positions. So, to recap US Team results: Jose Diaz brought home Gold in Men's Singles; Jake Bredenbeck took



Back row L-R: Kirk, Rajsich, Bredenbeck, Horn, Herrera. Front row: Lotts, Ellis, Diaz, Davis



Jose Diaz not only helped the team secure a spot at the Pan American Games for the U.S., he also won the singles title for himself! He and coach Dave Ellis were rightly pleased! Photo by Cheryl Kirk.



Silver in Men's Singles; the Men's Team placed #1; Women's Team #6; and Overall Team #2.

Banquet & Awards

After a lovely meal on the final night of PARC and IRF events, it's traditional for countries to thank the Local Organizing Committee. On behalf of the US Team, Bobby Horn and Cheryl Kirk presented an American Eagle Silver coin in an engraved case to Rafael Fernández for his hard work and leadership in hosting this great event.

Also recognized was Gary Mazaroff, who was presented with the well-deserved PARC Presidential Award for his numerous contributions to the international community over many years.

THE U.S. DELEGATION

Jake Bredenbeck

(Phoenix, AZ) – Singles

Jose Diaz

(Stockton, CA) – Singles

Co-Captain David "Bobby" Horn

(Stockton, CA) – Doubles

Anthony Herrera

(Phoenix, AZ) – Doubles

Co-Captain Rhonda Rajsich

(Phoenix, AZ) – Singles and Doubles

Da'monique Davis

(San Antonio, TX) – Singles

Sheryl Lotts

(Columbus, OH) – Doubles

Dave Ellis

(Stockton, CA) – Head Coach

Cheryl Kirk

(Naperville, IL) – Team Leader

Eric Harris

(Scottsdale, AZ) – Athletic Trainer

- Numerous volunteers who worked tirelessly in support of this event and its players, coaches, and delegates from the 16 countries in attendance
- Rick Glazebrook of eNetLive.tv for excellent streaming production, along with Gary Mazaroff and Tim Baghurst for on-air color commentary
- Back at home, Leo Vasquez dropped whatever he was doing to re-post blog comments and photos at a moment's notice. Related to those efforts, the US Team appreciated all the support it received via Facebook, Twitter, email, text messages, and telepathy.
- Jonathan Clay of Rollout Racquetball, the Official Apparel Sponsor for USA Racquetball and its US Teams, joins all contributors, large and small, in making every gift count!

The Team USA Challenge on www.usaracquetball.com invites players and enthusiasts to support the adult and junior US Teams with much-needed funding to underwrite the costs of international competition.

Great Job, Team USA! You represented your country's racquetball family very well indeed!

Daily blogs and photos from the event can be found on www.usaracquetball.com.



CALENDAR of EVENTS

For the latest in USA Racquetball Sanctioned Events visit USARacquetball.com

Date(s)	Event Name	City	State	Venue
July 8-12	National Senior Games	Minneapolis	MN	University Of Minnesota Rec Center
July 9-12	WOR Championships	Huntington Beach	CA	
July 9-12	Courthouse of Blues XXI	Jackson	MS	The Courthouse Racquet and Fitness - Lakeland
July 10-12	IRT Georgia Games Racquetball Championships	Lilburn	GA	Recreation ATL
July 11	Hot Summer Nights	Indianapolis	IN	Jordan YMCA
July 11-12	July Triple Crown Racquetball Shootout	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club
July 17-18	Kansas Sunflower Games	Topeka	KS	Downtown Topeka YMCA
July 17-19	PSL Shootout	Port St. Lucie	FL	Port St. Lucie Civic Center
July 17-19	Rocky Mountain State Games Racquetball	Colorado Springs	CO	Downtown Colorado Springs YMCA
July 17-19	Florida Open	Port St. Lucie	FL	Port St. Lucie Civic Center
July 17-19	Subway Commonwealth Games of Virginia	Lynchburg	VA	Liberty University Sports Racket
July 18	Belle Isle Summer Classic	Detroit	MI	Belle Isle Park
July 18-19	Graffiti Nights Doubles Shootout	Modesto	CA	In-Shape Sport: Modesto
July 22-25	NMRA International Championships	Highlands Ranch	CO	Highlands Ranch Recreation Center at Northridge
July 24-25	Summerfest	Lombard	IL	Glass Court Swim & Fitness
July 25-26	Hot Tamale	San Antonio	TX	Thousand Oaks Family YMCA
July 30-Aug. 3	Elite Camp	Centennial	CO	LifeTime Fitness
Aug. 1	Can you stand the Heat 11	Saint Clair Shores	MI	Saint Clair Shores Outdoor Courts
Aug. 1	Outdoor Brawl II	East Brunswick	NJ	Bicentennial Park
Aug. 1	Rally In The Region	Scherrerville	IN	Omni 41
Aug. 6-9	Pepsi Cup Colorado Team Championship	Highlands Ranch	CO	Highlands Ranch Recreation Center at Northridge
Aug. 8	YSU Penguin Icebreaker	Youngstown	OH	Stambaugh Stadium (YSU)
Aug. 8	Soda Man 3WallBall Shootout at the Stratosphere	Las Vegas	NV	Stratosphere Hotel & Casino
Aug. 8-9	August Triple Crown Racquetball Shootout	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club
Aug. 9	Michigan Senior Olympics Summer 2015	Warren	MI	Warren Racquet Club
Aug. 14-16	Summer Scorch & IRT/CPRT Shootout	Simi Valley	CA	Oakridge Athletic Club
Aug. 15-16	Belle Isle Long Wall Championships	Detroit	MI	Belle Isle Park
Aug. 28-30	Fran Davis Racquetball Camp	San Antonio	TX	Thousand Oaks Family YMCA
Aug. 29-30	RYDF Junior Nor Cal Fund Raiser	Alameda	CA	Club Sport - San Ramon
Sept. 1-5	IRF World Senior Championships	Albuquerque	NM	Midtown Sports And Wellness
Sept. 11-13	September Triple Crown Championships	Arlington	TX	Maverick Athletic Club
Sept. 18-20	NC Fall Classic Racquetball Championships	Charlotte	NC	YMCA - Dowd
Sept. 18-20	Garnet and Gold Classic	Tallahassee	FL	FSU Leach Center
Sept. 24-27	3WallBall World Championships	Las Vegas	NV	Stratosphere Hotel & Casino
Oct. 3	Bay City Rollout	Bay City	MI	Bay Area Family YMCA
Oct. 7-11	UnitedHealthcare US OPEN Championships	Minneapolis	MN	LifeTime Fitness - Target Center
Oct. 30 - Nov. 1	WRT	Modesto	CA	Fitness Evolution
Oct. 31 - Nov. 1	6th Annual Ghostly Doubles	San Antonio	TX	Gold's Gym HCV
Nov. 6-8	Fran Davis Racquetball Camp	Chicago	IL	The Glass Court Swim and Fitness Club
Dec. 3-5	NMRA Doubles-Only Fullerton	Fullerton	CA	The Meridian Sports Club
Dec. 11-13	WRT Alamo City Open	San Antonio	TX	Thousand Oaks Family YMCA

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At the Annual Awards Celebration at National Singles in Denver on May 23, six individuals were recognized for outstanding accomplishments on and off the court.

Athletes of the Year

To earn his first Athlete of the Year Award, **Jake Bredenbeck**, of Chandler, Arizona, had a breakout year in national and international competition, winning the 2014 National Singles and finishing second at the recent Pan American Racquetball Championships in the Dominican Republic. He also medaled in both singles and doubles competition at last year's PASO Pan American Sports Festival in Mexico.

Rhonda Rajsich of Phoenix, Arizona, has been tapped to receive this award for the seventh – and fifth consecutive time – this year. She won the 2014 U.S. National Singles Championships, the 2015 U.S. National Doubles title, plus earned silver medals in singles at last year's IRF World Championships in Canada, and in doubles at the 2014 PASO Pan American Sports Festival in Mexico.

Age Group Athletes of the Year

For a record-setting eighth time, **Jimmy Lowe** of Aiea, Hawaii, accepted the Bud Muehleisen Male Age Group Award, for capturing gold medals in the 45+ and 55+ divisions at National Singles, in the 40+ and 50+ divisions at the UnitedHealthcare US OPEN, and silver in the 40+ division at this year's National Doubles Championships.

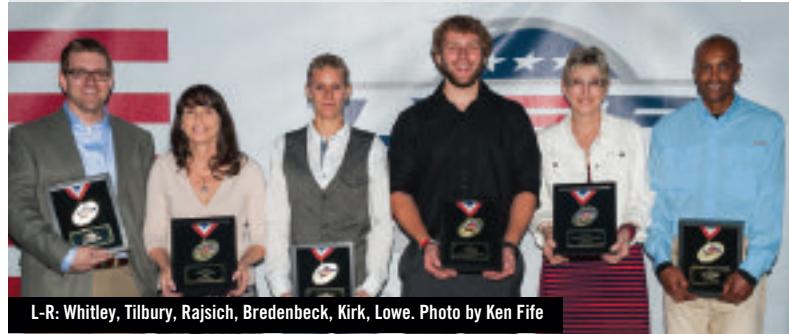
First-time recipient **Cindy Tilbury** of Malibu, California was the 2015 winner of the Peggy Steding Female Age Group Award after a banner year. Her medal count included silver medals in the 50+ and 55+ at National Singles, another in 55+ at the US OPEN, a gold in Mixed 45+ at National Doubles, plus singles gold in 55+ at the WMSRA Championships and the IRF World Senior Racquetball Championships.

Contributor and Volunteer Awards

The Joe Sobek Outstanding Contribution Award went to **Cheryl Kirk** of Naperville, Illinois, who served on the USA Racquetball Board from 2006-2012 and as its President for the last four years of her tenure. She is Team Leader for the U.S. National and Junior National Teams, an officer on the IRF and PARC Boards of Directors, and also serves as the IRF Press Officer and a contributing editor for *Racquetball Magazine*.

Presidential Award winner **Dan Whitley** of Kirkwood, Missouri, has been President of the Missouri Racquetball Association since 2004 and the Executive Director of the Missouri High School Racquetball Association since 2002. Whitley, who also helped found the MORA Hall of Fame in 2011, is most proud that the organization doesn't rest; it continually tries new things and always strives for improvement.

View full details, photos and bios at USARacquetball.com > News > 2015 Annual Award Winners.



NICE SHOT

NAP WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

In Tempe for National Intercollegiates, Oregon State's **Sarah Lewis** prepares for her next match with some shut eye ... and this Aggie gets 40 winks on the sidelines.

Large photo by Bob Bodor; inset by John Foust.



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